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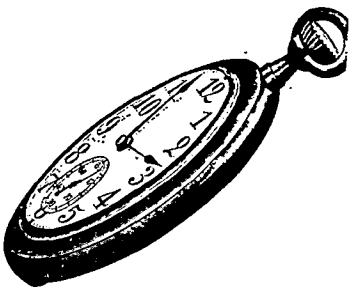

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Henry Fairlie

Martin Luther King

"You *can liberate a freeman, but you cannot liberate a slave.*" That is the first and the last thing to be said about Martin Luther King. Almost alone among American Negro leaders, he had ceased to be a slave. He had become a free man, who could be liberated as a human being. Almost every other American Negro leader, from the Uncle Toms to the SNCC extremists, is still bound in the wheel of slavery. Almost none can escape the memory of it. They are slaves still; and it is to slavery, like Nat Turner, that they react. Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown are not yet free men. "It is the nature of slavery," says Louis Halle again, "to render its victims so abject that at last, fearing to be free, they multiply their own chains." This is the Black Power leader. He fastens fetters to himself even as he screams for freedom. Martin Luther King, almost alone, had escaped from slavery, whereas others have escaped only from the slave-owners. He had surmounted it, had left it behind, and could think and feel, act and speak, as a free man.

He was not a saint, he was a man; a whole and liberated man, while so many others, white as well as black, remained slaves. This was his greatness; and this, above all, was his prophecy.

MARTIN LUTHER KING was given to America by the South. The South may have killed him—we do not know yet—but it was the South also which bore him. He himself would have made the acknowledgment. It meant everything that he was buried in a Baptist Church of the South, to the hymns of the South, to the rhetoric of the South, to the prayers of the South: the black South maybe, but still the South.

"Go gently into the South," I was advised when I first came to America three years ago, and I took the advice. I journeyed slowly through Virginia, through North Carolina and South Carolina, until at last I reached Georgia; and there, for a time, I stopped to survey the civilisation in which I had arrived, before pushing on to the dark interior of the South, in Alabama and Mississippi and Louisiana, where the civilisation has survived, until now, a closed and arrested society. Like almost all who know the South, I found that I grew more and more fascinated by it: that I grew to love it and to fear it; and then to love it more and fear it more. Not the white South or the black South, but the South itself, in which, as W. J. Cash said, "Negro entered into white man as white man entered into Negro," the relationship between them "nothing less than organic." That the Negro problem in America was ceasing to be a Southern problem was one of the most directly personal difficulties which Martin Luther King encountered.

ALL THE QUALITIES of the South, as Cash pointed out, find expression in its fondness for rhetoric, a "gorgeous, primitive art, addressed to the autonomic system and not to the encephalon"; and in the South, from the beginning, "there was the daily impact upon the white man of the example of the Negro, concerning whom nothing is so certain as his remarkable tendency to seize on lovely words, to roll them in his throat, to heap them in redundant profusion one upon another until meaning vanishes and there is nothing left but the sweet, canorous drunkenness of sound."

I first heard Southern rhetoric at an annual, open-air, gathering of red-neck farmers in the tidelands of Virginia. I heard it again at a Ku Klux Klan rally, at Durham in North Carolina, a cross-burning preceded by hour upon hour of speeches, of primitive rhythm, of the "canorous drunkenness of sound." I heard it again from

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a sheriff, in front of a courthouse in Mississippi. But I heard it most often whenever I went to a Negro church in the South, and listened as the Biblical prose was churned into passionate oratory, flung by the preacher to his congregation in mounting cadences, until at last, all voluntary power surrendered, they flung back their *Amens* at every sentence. It is one of the sounds of the South which stay with me: the *Amens* of the white Klan rally and the black Baptist congregation, in the heaviness of the heat and the moist, impossible to tell apart, since the voice is the same, the voice of the South.

This was the instrument which Martin Luther King took from the South, translating it to his own use, until all America listened to it as its own prophecy, and even all the world listened and claimed it as its voice.

In the most famous passage of his most famous speech, before the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, in 1963, three centuries of the rhetoric of the South were pulled together into one exalted outburst. Every device ever contrived by every preacher of the South, black or white, was put to use, until his huge audience, black and white, had been carried beyond itself, no longer merely the sum of its members. He bit into the gathering *Amens,* the answering "Yeah! Yeah!", the thundering applause, for they were not to be allowed to rest, but were to be carried to a higher pitch with each ejaculation.

It went like this.

> I have a dream that one day even the State of Mississippi, a desert sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression

"Yeah! Yeah!"—

> will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

—the *Amens* roll into the rising applause. He does not let them die:

> I have a dream that my four little children

—"Amen! Amen!" "Yeah! Yeah!"—

> will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character

—the *Amens* and the applause swell. But he bites into them:

> I have a dream today.

The applause rises, held now in anticipation of what is to come:

> I have a dream that one day the State of Alabama. . . .

And so on, until he bites again into the applause, with the reiterated, "I have a dream today," as he carries the audience to the final:

> I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain will be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Ben Shahn has done a drawing of Martin Luther King, in which the man seems to be part of the background of the Georgia soil and the Georgia sky. He was indeed, and this one must remember if one is to understand him, a gift of the South.

ONE OF THE SAD things about America today is that the South, which has so much to teach the North about the races living in close proximity, is unable to do so, partly as a result of its own defects, partly as a result of its own arrested development, partly because the problems in the North are not the same as the problems in the South, and partly because the terrible gap between the North and the South has not been bridged more than a century after the Civil War. That the South should at last have spoken to the North through one of its Negroes may seem a paradox or an irony. But it is merely another example of the truth in the man. With this truth within him, he took the violent rhetoric of the South—and his own was violent—and made it carry the message of non-violence.

IT IS STRANGE—and important—to remember how small was the issue with which he began his struggle for the civil rights of Negroes. One night, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks, a Negro seamstress, got on a bus and sat down near the front. Following custom, the driver ordered her to give her seat to a white man and to move to the back. She refused. "I don't know why," she said later. "I was just tired. My feet hurt." She was prosecuted and fined. Martin Luther King called his first non-violent protest: the Negro boycott of the buses. The bus company was driven to the verge of bankruptcy, and then capitulated. It desegregated its buses. Only a year before, in 1954, the

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U.S. Supreme Court had ordered the desegregation of public education.

But there is something else which helps, perhaps even more forcefully, to fix the time of Martin Luther King, and the context in which he acted. James Baldwin published *Notes of a Native Son* in 1957. *Nobody Knows My Name* and *Another Country* followed in 1961 and 1962. Father Malcolm Boyd has recently said of them:

> At his best, what did James Baldwin achieve? He let someone white get inside his black skin (not just any black skin, but Baldwin's own). The white person had a new experience, a rather shattering, personal one. In those curious pre-movement, pre-revolution days, he found out from Baldwin how, quite precisely, it makes an absolute major difference in this society what kind of skin one wears. Then the reader, racist or liberal, bigot or paternalist, had to take a further step, face a simpler and greater truth—that skin is essentially skin.

This, of course, is precisely what the Black Power leader today denies. Skin, he says, is not essentially skin: it is mind and heart and soul and being. He proclaims his skin. He has no desire to let the white man inside his skin anymore than he wishes to get inside the white man's skin. Neither Stokely Carmichael nor H. Rap Brown could use the term, "skin deep." They deny the common humanity which lies beneath the skin, and so logically preach *apartheid*.

Did Martin Luther King and James Baldwin, then, merely serve their hour, and have they now been overtaken? Was Martin Luther King a man for one season only, or for all seasons? No one who knew him denies that the new leaders' assertion of their "blackness" or "*négritude*" was a deeply personal challenge to him: that he examined himself and his position with an exacting and painful rigour, before emerging, in the last few months of his life, with his old beliefs intact, still persuaded that integration, and not *apartheid*, was the right course. His march on Washington was to be a march of the poor. His opposition to the war in Viet Nam was the opposition of a pacifist. His witness was still to be the witness of a man, black or white. It could not be otherwise, unless he were to enslave himself, were to cease to act as a liberated man.

No WHITE MAN can easily dismiss the furious emotions which nourish the Black Power movement, and which it in turn nourishes. Yet the white man must try to speak and act as a liberated man, too: liberated from the feelings of guilt which prevent him from offering his own views frankly. I have taken considerable trouble to read the literature of the Black Power movement, and I have not the slightest doubt that it is a reactionary one. It can lead nowhere but back. Its end can only be slavery to slavery. Separate Negro states would be slave states, in mind and temper, perhaps even in regulation. This new self-enslavement is noticeable in the most recent writings of Negroes like LeRoi Jones. Father Malcolm Boyd, again, has pointed to the new stereotype of the Negro which is being created in these post-movement, post-revolution days: "A stereotype needs to be removed, so that underneath it a person who is an artist may find himself. . . ."

It was the black stereotype—whether created, first, by the white man or, now, by the Negro himself—which Martin Luther King consistently rejected throughout his career. He would have none of it; and he could have none of it because, to him, a stereotype was simply another form of slavery. He would no more enslave himself to a stereotype than to a slave-owner; and he would not ask his people to do so. In this, he knew them well. There is no such personality, individual or collective, as *the* American Negro. Martin Luther King had good reason to know this: when Mayor Wagner called him to Harlem during the riots of 1964, the people there gave him a hostile reception. It was inevitable that they should do so. The cultural diversity of the American Negroes is remarkable, and there is little the Negroes of Harlem have in common with the Negroes of the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference). This is one reason why the Black Power leaders have no real base, why they move from city to city taking advantage of whatever situations they find favourable, why they are themselves so divided amongst themselves. There is no Black People to whom to give Black Power. Of all people, the American Negroes, with their diverse experiences, cannot be enslaved in a stereotype.

MARTIN LUTHER KING had a base. In recent years, he stubbed his toes many times not only against the white communities of the North, but also against their black communities. His march of the poor on Washington was, essentially, a return to his true base. The

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marchers were to be drawn from all over the country, but their core was to come from the South: the temper was to be the temper of the South. The mule wagon which drew his body at his funeral was intentionally symbolic: and how far it seemed from the conditions—and the looting and the arson—of the Northern cities.

It does Martin Luther King no honour not to recognise the character of his base. Donald B. Gibson has recently pointed out "the absurdity of the notion that there are Negro leaders who may speak for the Negro in the same sense that leaders of countries, communities, or religious sects, may speak for their citizens or congregations...." Martin Luther King was, to this extent, a politician with a base in exactly the same way as Adam Clayton Powell is a politician with a base. The Negro in the North, in fact, has always had every reason to disclaim Martin Luther King's leadership. Yet from this narrow base—as narrow as any held by any Negro leader—he had, by the time he died, established an exceptional position, and it is this that is remarkable.

During the days after his death, I asked an American friend how he would summarise the real importance of Martin Luther King. He thought for a moment, and then said: "I guess he was the first Negro leader to show that he had the capacity to survive. After all, there he was, fourteen years after it all began, still at the head...." From the bus boycott in Montgomery to a movement which deserves to be called a revolution: and still there, was Martin Luther King. The gathering momentum of the revolution had not swept him away. He had suffered setbacks; but he never sank beneath the flood. As the revolution became more and more violent, there was every temptation for him to become more and more extreme; instead, he came back, and back again, and then back again, his views, his character, his ambitions, his position, *all unchanged*. He did not modify, nor qualify. Yet he survived. There is only one possible explanation, and of how few men in history can it be said: there was a truth in the man which no temptation could bend and no opposition could break.

What Robert Bolt says of Thomas More, in his introduction to *A Man For All Seasons*, can with the smallest adjustments be said of Martin Luther King:

> ... Thomas More, as I wrote about him, became for me a man with an adamantine sense of his own self. He knew where he began and left off, what area of himself he could yield to the encroachments of his enemies, and what to the encroachments of those he loved. It was a substantial area in both cases.... Since he was a clever man and a great lawyer, he was able to retire from those areas in wonderfully good order, but at length he was asked to retreat from that final area where he located his self. And there this ... person set like metal, was overtaken by an absolutely primitive rigour, and could be no more budged than a cliff.

His followers in Atlanta held up the banner: "*Free At Last.*" One can hardly quarrel with so deeply Christian a legend for so deeply Christian a man. Yet he seemed to me the free man here on earth. He did not have to wait for the assassin to be liberated. By some marvel, born in the hills of the South, he had freed himself; and freed the rest of us a little; freed us especially from our fears.

We are all a little less slaves as a result of Martin Luther King's life.

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Raymond Aron

The General & the Jews

A New Time of Suspicion?

I HESITATED for a long time before writing these lines. If certain voices had been raised, if, at the end of November, a single Gaullist, François Mauriac or André Malraux, had replied to General de Gaulle as he would have replied to any other statesman who had spoken in the same terms, I should have taken no part in a controversy in which I cannot join without uneasiness. Alas, none of these writers, the glories of French literature, none of those who have so often spoken for the conscience of mankind, has said a word. I have therefore decided, or rather have resigned myself, not so much to play a part to which I have no claim, as to answer an accusation which is all the more insidious because it has not been plainly stated. A defendant deprived of counsel takes up his own defence.

I am not indifferent to the objections raised by some people, including even some of my friends. The only proper answer, they say, to such an insidious and evil thesis, is silence. By taking notice of the evil, you aggravate it—you furnish arguments to your opponents—you will never strike the right note—you will be either too aggressive or too much on the defensive—you will only irritate both your non-Jewish fellow countrymen and your "co-religionists." Of the latter, some will think you too detached about Israel and some not enough. Some will take for granted the fundamental distinction between church and state, others will reject it. You call on the Jews to show mutual toleration, and on the French to understand a unique situation, which is that of the Jews, who accept the contradictions of their position less for rational motives (which they nevertheless value more than anything else) than for emotional ones. And you take the risk of annoying them all because they demand a solution while all you do is to ask questions.

It may well be that, as some people think, what I have written will do more harm than good. Nevertheless, I have faith in the optimists, and hope that my readers, Jew and Gentile, will read this testimony of a solitary individual in the spirit in which it was written; not without passion, but without bad faith, with the wish to understand a fate which I have no desire to evade.

The meeting between the Chief Rabbi and General de Gaulle and the latter's letter to Mr. Ben-Gurion demanded a short comment, but not, I think, any amendment of what follows. With reference to the phrase which has caused such deep feeling—"*Un peuple d'élite, sûr de lui-même et dominateur*"—the President of the French Republic today asserts that "there can be nothing offensive in emphasising the qualities by which this people has been able to survive and maintain its identity for nineteen centuries of unspeakable suffering."

The anonymous letters received the day after the General's press conference are sufficient to prove, if any proof was required, that not all Frenchmen (in particular, M. Xavier Vallat) have interpreted this phrase, inserted into a statement about Israel, as a compliment to the

TO THE *stereotypes of contemporary social attitudes came recently a new and surprising contribution—General de Gaulle on the Jews. His remarks in Paris last winter at one of his famous press conferences have caused widespread comment and controversy, in some circles with passions that recall the Dreyfus case days.* RAYMOND ARON'S *little book,* De Gaulle, Israël et les Juifs, *has just been published by Plon.*

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Jewish people. Like many of the sayings of our Chief of State, the words are intentionally ambiguous, and the anti-Semite has every right to quote a celebrated phrase and say: "*Je vous ai compris.*" Moreover, to call the people of the ghettos "self-confident and domineering" still seems to me today as ridiculous as it is offensive.

NEVERTHELESS—and I rejoice in the fact—General de Gaulle has wished, without qualifying what he has said and without withdrawing his condemnation of the policy of the Israeli government, to refute the charges of anti-Semitism which have been made against him. In the following pages, I have not myself repeated such charges, simply because the mere concept of "anti-Semitism" lends itself to infinite equivocations. The General's press conference authorised a revival of anti-Semitism; his latest comments suspend, as it were, this authorisation. But in the manner of the Prince, that is to say, by putting his own responsibilities on to others: only "convinced anti-Gaullists" could "pretend to find insults" in what every right-minded person would regard as praise.

The last word has not yet been said. By now everyone understands the techniques by which one blows alternately hot and cold. Two steps forward, then one step back. But in spite of everything, I agree, in good faith but without illusions, to André Fontaine's formula: "It is still not too late to substitute a constructive dialogue for acrimonious and empty polemic. . . ."

MONTHS have passed, and General de Gaulle's press conference is still news. The President of the Republic's remarks still continue to agitate "the wounded heart of the Israelites," as the Reverend Father Riquet has recently put it. "The emotional reactions of the Jewish soul," understandable but unjustified? A "fatal misunderstanding," which the benevolent and subtle commentator feels sure he can explain?

No, Reverend Father. I do not doubt your sympathy; you have shown it before, in other times which called for more dangerous virtues. But I should be less frank than I ought if I did not confess my "emotional reactions" to your article. Why deny the evidence, and with such conviction? No one is morally obliged to get involved; after all, so many who should have listened heard nothing. But you did hear, and so you decided to re-read the speech. Very well, let us re-read it together. After all, laymen understand and respect the rules of exegesis. No one would dare to suspect General de Gaulle of not weighing his words, of surrendering to the tricks and pleasures of improvisation. Three passages, then, reveal the speaker's intention, which was deliberately aggressive.

> One might ask oneself, in fact, and even many Jews do ask, whether the establishment of this community on territories acquired by more or less justifiable means, and in the midst of the Arab peoples which were fundamentally hostile, would not involve innumerable and interminable causes of friction and conflict.

Such questions have in fact been asked, and quite rightly. One might also ask whether the President of the Republic finds it diplomatically useful, and in the interests of France, to resuscitate the past and give his own version of the events which led to the birth of the state of Israel. The phrase "more or less justifiable" applied to their territorial acquisitions has offended the Israelis; it decides in favour of the Arabs a question which has been vainly debated for dozens of years. All the same it is true, and it would be useless to deny it, that in fact many Jews have rejected Zionism, not merely because they preferred to be Frenchmen, Germans, Americans, but because they foresaw an interminable war between the two communities (Jewish and Arab) of Palestine.

Let us read together, Reverend Father, the passage which follows:

> Some have even wondered whether the Jews, who in the dispersion remained what they have always been, an élite people, self-confident and domineering, would not, when once re-united, transform into the vaulting ambition of a conqueror the hopes which they so movingly cherished for nineteen centuries: *Next year in Jerusalem.*

Your comment on this could not be better. According to you, such fears were refuted "by the peaceful enterprises which revivified the desert"—though it remains true that "certain people" have had such fears and that "there is no ground for asserting that the General shared them himself."

Did "certain people" have such fears beforehand? Possibly. How could one prove that these "certain people" did not exist? But when one remembers the portrait of the Jew painted by anti-Semites—the Jew of the hooked nose and

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grasping hands, "one might ask oneself" how many people foresaw and feared the military exploits of the Jews. As for whether or not General de Gaulle shared "the fears of certain people," it hardly matters. The words which "agitated the wounded hearts"—*i.e.*, "the Jews who in the dispersion remained what they have always been, an élite people, self confident and domineering"—are not attributed by General de Gaulle to anyone else; they are his words. For a statesman to define a "people" by two attributes is to degrade himself into thinking in terms of national stereotypes and racial prejudice, of the kind which circulate unendingly in every saloon-bar and of which psychologists and psychiatrists are never tired of trying to explain the motivations. General de Gaulle has so degraded himself because he wished to hit below the belt; to explain Israeli imperialism in terms of the eternal "domineering" character of the Jewish people. Why this blow below the belt? I do not know. But for Heaven's sake, Reverend Father, realise that here is something which has to be understood, even by a General without a wounded heart.

THE PHRASE ITSELF was irrelevant to the argument. Whether the Jews are or are not a people, whether they are domineering or not, the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine made possible, may even have necessarily involved, interminable conflicts. And the dialectic of hostility may in its turn have provoked the Jews into aggression. But this does not mean that the Jewish people, by its very nature and throughout the centuries, has been and remains "self confident and domineering."

A little further on, General de Gaulle corrects himself in a way which reveals, if not the sensibility of the author at least the intentions of the statesman. Is it right to say that the Jews "provoked"—or "inspired"—"ill-will"? (How much one admires such euphemisms!) The President of the Republic leaves no room for doubt. Let us read him together, Reverend Father:

> Despite the wave, sometimes rising, sometimes falling, of ill-will provoked, or more exactly, inspired, by the Jews in certain countries and certain periods, they accumulated a certain balance of interest, even of sympathy, in their favour, especially, it goes without saying, in Christendom.

Let us admire once again the art of the Prince. It is something we have known for a long time—the persecuted are responsible for the persecution they suffer. As for the balance of interest and sympathy accumulated by the Jews in Christendom, am I allowed to recommend the President of the Republic to read a few books on the history of anti-Semitism? The indoctrination of contempt, the pogroms in the Rhineland on the eve of the first Crusade, twenty tragic centuries are dismissed with a literary flourish which would only deserve a shrug of the shoulders if the speaker did not summon the whole world to witness to his genius.

Finally, the Jews appear again for a third time in the speech—as invaders of Quebec. "Among the immigrants whom the Canadian government were determined to anglicise," the Jews occupy a place of honour among the Mediterranean peoples, the Slavs, the Scandinavians, the Asiatics. Once again, the Jews are given particular mention.

But has not General de Gaulle (or so everyone says, whether Jew or Gentile) proved by his actions the absurdity of the charge of anti-Semitism? In Free France, in the movements of the *R.P.F.* and the *U.N.R.*, in the Gaullist government, Jews have frequently played a leading part. General de Gaulle (the person to whom the President refers in the third person) has not apparently exercised any discrimination between Jewish and non-Jewish Frenchmen. Why should he deny his own work, his past, his glory? Why should he, who wishes to be the incarnation of France, alienate not merely the Jews but all those who have not forgotten the "abominable persecutions" which the Jews suffered during the last World War, those who are still haunted by the memory of the gas chambers, or those who simply think it wasteful, if not criminal, to add unnecessarily one more conflict to all those which are already tearing France apart?

THESE ARE legitimate questions, but they do not override the facts. The Jews of France (or rather, of the entire world) immediately realised the historic significance of the words pronounced on 28 November 1967 by the President of the French Republic. The anti-Semites received from the head of the State the official authority to speak again in the same language as before the great massacre. State-approved anti-Semitism at one blow became

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salonfähig, as the Germans say. On this matter, I defy any man of good faith to contradict me when I say that General de Gaulle could not possibly have not foreseen the emotional reactions which he "provoked, or more exactly, inspired." Since 1945 no Western statesman has spoken of the Jews in this style or defined them as a "people" by two attributes. We all know the style, we all know the attributes, they belong to Edouard Drumont and to Charles Maurras, not to Hitler and his followers. After all, Georges Bernanos never admitted any connection between his old master, Drumont, to whom he was faithful to the end, and Hitler, who filled him with profound horror.

For twenty years, there was a kind of tabu on freedom of speech on this subject. I have been told that the Jews imposed a kind of "reign of terror." Evoking or invoking their dead, they forbade discussion of a subject which has not ceased to exist simply because we deny its existence. To tell the truth, one does sometimes create a problem by raising it; but let us admit the existence of the problem. I myself, in all naïveté, believed that "a certain silence" was to be explained less by "Jewish terrorism" than by conscientious scruples. What would a Drumont have thought if he had lived long enough to witness genocide? "I never wanted that"? Or would he have gone even further in self-criticism?

PROBABLY I was wrong. Let the dead bury the dead. No Jew has the right to impose silence on an anti-Semite by recalling the evils of yesterday, even though they were beyond all measure. I will not associate the anti-Semites of today with Hitler and his followers in order to disqualify them without a hearing. But, writing as a free man in a free country, I say that General de Gaulle has knowingly and deliberately opened a new era in the history of the Jews, and, possibly, of anti-Semitism. Everything has become possible again. Everything has begun again. There is no question, certainly, of persecution—only of "ill-will." Not a time of contempt—a time of suspicion.

IN THE LATEST of his half-yearly monologues, General de Gaulle had spoken at length about Israel and about Quebec. At first sight, the emphasis seems slightly surprising.

The press conference did not significantly modify his previous position either in the one case or the other. Israelis and Arabs already knew on which side General de Gaulle's sympathies lay. (After the vote at the United Nations, the fiction of neutrality had disappeared.) As for Quebec, its people already knew (even if not all of them wanted to know) that General de Gaulle recommended sovereignty, *i.e.* separatism. But the Word, impressive as it was, did not immediately bring peace on the Canal or on the Jordan, nor create the conditions for politico-economic independence on the banks of the St. Lawrence.

The importance which General de Gaulle has given to the two latest crises of his reign is difficult to explain by any desire to influence the course of events. The settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict suggested by the General contains, in well-mixed proportions, conditions which are unacceptable to both sides. It is no better nor worse than any other plan and, under actual circumstances, has not the slightest chance of being accepted by either the one side or the other. In fact, however, it is not a matter of a peace settlement, but of a settlement of accounts.

With whom? With the French press, which has twice in six months committed the crime of *lèse-majesté*: by criticising the conduct of French foreign policy, and by alienating public opinion (or a section of public opinion) from the person who, since 1940, perhaps even longer, incarnated French legitimacy, incarnated France herself.

> What would Valéry have said about our press, if he had lived long enough to read everything which so many of our newspapers were able to publish—didn't they?—on the occasion of the visit paid by General de Gaulle to the French of Canada.

In the Quebec affair, the press interposed between General de Gaulle and public opinion. In the Middle East affair, the Jews intervened. Interpreters of opinion in the Elysée left no doubt of what the General's words meant. Reunited in Palestine, the Jews, henceforward an Israeli nation, had entered on the path of conquest. The Jews of the Diaspora should choose between their country and Israel. Certainly they ought to choose—and the immense majority of French Jews chose France, without hesitation and without reservations. But would they ever get rid of the old Adam, "self-confident and domineering," if they had not done so at the end of twenty centuries? As French citizens, did they lose the right of feeling and showing some sympathy for the Israeli cause?

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At this point, let us be careful not to fall into the trap which has been set. By inserting a phrase about "the Jewish people" into an historical account of the foundations of Israel, the Head of State deliberately invited two replies, one defending the State of Israel, the other condemning the summary (not to say insulting) description of Jews as such. The conjunction of the two replies would lay a new foundation for an implied charge of "double allegiance." Inevitably the Jews were divided, some anxious only to assert with renewed force their unique and exclusive allegiance to France, others wishing to claim the right both to French citizenship and to sympathy with Israel; both mutually accusing each other, on the one hand of encouraging anti-Semitism, on the other of betraying their "Judaism," and guilty both if they did not accept without question the implications of national policy (as interpreted by General de Gaulle) and also if they did—condemned to betray either their country or their brethren.

Let us however try to distinguish between what the Machiavellianism of one man and twenty centuries of history tend to confuse inextricably.

I HAVE NEVER believed in the permanence of the exclusive alliance in the Middle East between France and Israel. Based on France's struggle to maintain her sovereignty in North Africa, it was always possible that the alliance would not survive the circumstances which inspired it. Those who recognise international relations for what they are should not pretend to be either astonished or indignant when the calculations of "*monstres froids*" turn enemies into allies and allies into enemies. When Mr. Ben-Gurion came to Paris, Israel was still a friend and ally and yet, according to the orator of 1967, "as a result of the Franco-British expedition to Suez, one had in fact witnessed the appearance of a State of Israel that was both warlike and determined on expansion." One might well ask whether, if only in the national interest, it would not have been better to carry out such a reversal of policy, so well adapted to the laws of the international jungle, in a less provocative manner.

After all, professors of Machiavellianism have never advised the Prince to multiply his outward manifestations of cynicism. Simple mortals, separated by their littleness from the heights of the Elysée, do not live according to the imperative of power politics. They feel naïve and primitive emotions; they like to think that their guide has the same humanity as themselves, that he takes into account the national interest but also certain imponderables, as we say, of justice, of misfortune. . . .

The Jews may suffer because of the rupture of the alliance between France and Israel—an alliance which made easy for them their condition as French citizens of Jewish origin[1]—may regret the rupture, and discuss its advantages and disadvantages at the same level, that of the national interest, as that which the Head of State legitimately assumes. Neither more nor less. However special Israel is in many respects, as a state it is a state like any other, not a just state but a violent one, threatened with death and compelled to use force in order to survive. Friendship between monsters is not lasting.

In general, French Jews (including the volunteers for Israel, some of them passionately Gaullist) entirely understand French neutrality as between Israel and the Arab countries. Any French government, after the independence of Algeria and the achievement of decolonisation, would have tried to restore the so-called traditional links with the Arab countries of the Middle East. General de Gaulle addressed himself to the task with success, yet without at the same time turning against Israel. It is likely that he had the ambition, the noble ambition, of contributing to the reconciliation of "Israel and Islam." And according to my information, he thought he was near to succeeding. Perhaps the violence of his statement to the press expresses a disappointment as great as his previous hopes.

Of course, it depended on others most of all. Let us go back to the crisis a year ago. The interest of France, of the Arab countries, of Israel herself (whatever the Israelis may think today) demanded above all that war should be avoided. There were some on both sides who, deep down, probably wanted one; yet as an episode in a protracted conflict, war could not solve anything. For those who knew the situation in the Middle East, the closing of the Gulf of Aqaba meant that war was extremely probable. The Egyptians knew it as well as the Israelis.

[1] I use this term, for lack of a better one for the Jews of whom I am one, who are neither religious nor practising, and who have not even retained anything of "Jewish culture."

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Today, the Aqaba incident, "mistakenly brought about by Egypt" (a charming euphemism) has become "a pretext offered to those who dreamed of resorting to force." At the time, I dined by chance with a Minister who, having just left a cabinet meeting at the Elysée, proved to me by trade statistics that after all the "incident" was of no importance. I tried, vainly, to convince him of the opposite. If General de Gaulle had used his influence with President Nasser to dissuade him from the adventure, if, either alone or in agreement with the United States and Great Britain, he had honoured the Fourth Republic's commitment to maintain freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, the Six Days War would not have taken place. Of course, General de Gaulle would not then have been able to glory in his vain and solitary wisdom. Effective action would have taken the place of vainglorious words.

French diplomacy made the same mistake as that of Yugoslavia and India. The delegates of these two countries to the United Nations pressed U Thant to satisfy President Nasser as quickly as possible, *i.e.* to withdraw the United Nations force and thereby set the infernal machine in motion. For his part, General de Gaulle did nothing to prevent the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba, the Egyptian troop concentration in Sinai, the Jordanian-Egyptian alliance, the entry of Iraqi troops into Jordan, in other words, the events which made the explosion unavoidable. He proposed a four-power conference, which the Soviet Union refused (this should not have surprised him) and finally decided, for lack of anything better, on a solemn condemnation in advance, from the heights of Olympus, of whoever fired the first shot. A glance at the map would have allowed him to see, without much risk of error, by whom the first shot would, logically, have to be fired. From that day on, France renounced neutrality and took sides. The Israelis became guilty of the crime of *lèse-gaullisme*, and preferred the safety of their towns to the declarations of compassion and sympathy which General de Gaulle would have expressed to them at his next press conference as a reward for their docility. In Mr. Levi Eshkol's place, the author of *Fil de l'Épée* would have behaved no differently.

Passive when he still perhaps had a chance of averting the conflict, verbally aggressive when he had no further means of action, General de Gaulle added to his exploits some circumstantial statements. On the eve of the meeting between Mr. Kosygin and President Johnson at Glassboro, he announced that, because of the war in Viet Nam, the Russians and Americans would not enter into conversations. (In fact, communication was established on the morning of 5 June, and the two Great Powers agreed on non-intervention in the Middle East.) At the first session of the United Nations after the crisis, the French delegates multiplied their efforts, with limited success, to rally the Francophone African states behind the Soviet resolution.

Raison d'État, says the Gaullist. Sympathy or antipathy are irrelevant. Reconciled with the Arab world, France would not lose the chance of strengthening relations which even the Algerian war had not entirely broken. As a neutral, France would not have stood sufficiently apart from the United States and Great Britain. The threatened condemnation of whoever fired the first shot was a stroke of genius—it created an impression of neutrality while in fact making neutrality impossible. It undermined French public opinion, which was largely pro-Israel, even though it also wished for peace.

It may be so, and given the decision to support the Arab states, one cannot think of any better justification (though the idea of the President of the Republic dividing the just from the unjust, and issuing orders to sovereign states, makes one smile). But was the decision taken before the declaration which committed France? Can we not explain General de Gaulle's exasperation with Israel, at least in part, by his illusions about the effect of his empty interdict, illusions which may have been shared by his new "allies and friends" in Cairo and Damascus?

So far as I can judge, General de Gaulle did not foresee either the results of the "unfortunate affair of Aqaba" or the rapidity of the Israeli victory. To his Israeli visitors, he affirmed the necessity of a four-power agreement or, even more precisely, the urgency of negotiating with the Soviet Union. He saw a connection between the war in Viet Nam and the Israeli-Arab crisis. As for Israel's diplomats, they wondered what miracle General de Gaulle counted on to convert the leaders in the Kremlin to a peaceful settlement. They did not have much belief in the Gaullist thesis that the Soviet Union was mounting a "diversionary operation" in the Middle East as a reply to American aggression

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in Viet Nam. So far as they took this theory seriously, they wondered even more uneasily about the prospects and the advantages of four-power negotiations. Nothing can be done without Soviet participation, repeated General de Gaulle. Maybe, said the Israelis, but what can be done with it?

THE BALANCE of advantage to France of Gaullist diplomacy from May 1967 onwards is still to be struck. No one could honestly pretend that the profit and loss can be measured objectively. Arab gratitude, Israeli disillusion—everyone will make his own assessment of such imponderables. An Israeli minister said to me last August: "We were not afraid. As long as General de Gaulle, *preux chevalier*, is in power, we can count on France...." I replied: "You make the mistake of confusing St. Louis with Louis XI...." But so many millions of other people have discovered (or thought they had discovered) *their* France in him.

Nothing obliged General de Gaulle to make a choice. Before 1967, he alone of all the Western statesmen inspired confidence on both sides. Today, he also can only speak to one of them. Yet even to President Nasser, a General de Gaulle who was *persona grata* in Washington would be worth more than a rival to Marshal Tito. To achieve what he really did achieve, there was no need for the President of France to lose what he will never recover. Deception for the sake of some great enterprise is easily forgiven, sometimes even inspires admiration. Things are not the same when the objective itself is dubious, and when a reversal of alliances seems to be dictated by bad temper, wounded self-esteem, or obscure machinations.

SOMEONE (not necessarily a Gaullist) may reply in all good faith: "You have forgotten the essential point! You describe the reversal of alliances without regard to the reversal of values. Since last June, Israel has no longer appeared to the world like David confronting Goliath, a small people surrounded by enemies determined on her ruin, but as a proud nation oppressing millions of Arabs. Once again, General de Gaulle sensed before anyone else what was about to happen. European opinion, perhaps even American, will make Israel pay dearly for their earlier enthusiasm and their disillusionment today...."

According to de Gaulle at his conference, since 1956 Israel had shown herself to be an aggressive state determined on expansion. Several years after that date at the time of Mr. Ben-Gurion's visit to Paris, General de Gaulle still called his guest's country *"ami et allié."* He contrived to sell arms to her. Everyone knows that the hermit of Colombey attributed the failure of the Suez expedition to the mistakes of the Fourth Republic, but he did not condemn it in principle or on moral grounds. If General de Gaulle really believed that Israel "in order to enlarge her territory would be driven to exploit every opportunity that arose," why did he continue to sell her *Mystères* and *Mirages*? Unless of course, as the Israeli version of the de Gaulle-Ben-Gurion conversations asserts, the President of France had looked with favour on, and had even recommended to his guest, the territorial expansion which today he condemns. General MacArthur, on his return from Korea, naïvely declared before the entire American Congress that Japan and China had changed sides, Japan "from evil to good" and China *vice versa*. No one would accuse General de Gaulle of similar naïveté. In his case what matters are reasons of state.

BUT WHAT about us? I will not evade the question. By associating herself with the Franco-British expedition against Egypt, Israel compromised her cause. She resolutely exploited the last spasm of Franco-British imperialism to teach Egypt a lesson, to put an end to the *feddayin* raids, to open Elath to navigation. Did these advantages outweigh the moral cost of the operation, which was tarnished in the eyes of the best, the true friends of Israel, by secret collusion with Sir Anthony Eden and M. Guy Mollet? Let the Israelis themselves decide. I cannot speak for the conscience of the world. As a French citizen I disapproved, for moral as well as political reasons. The occupation of the Suez Canal or even the fall of President Nasser would not have brought peace either in Algeria or in the Middle East. Cynicism does not guarantee effectiveness.

There are some who today try to justify what deserves to be forgotten by the events of 1967. If, they say, the United States had permitted the French and British to proceed, or if the latter, despite Soviet-American opposition, had had the courage to go on "to the end," the world would have been saved a war. I am not concerned with the preliminaries to the Franco-

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British-Israeli act of aggression nor with the respective responsibilities of each of the allies, and I have scarcely any more sympathy with John Foster Dulles than with Sir Anthony Eden. But, in the last analysis, those who decide to resort to arms should at least calculate the relation of forces, and foresee the probable reactions of those involved. American reaction to a 20th-century version of gun-boat diplomacy was, to say the least, not difficult to foresee. And what kind of Egyptian government would have succeeded President Nasser's after the withdrawal of the Anglo-French forces (supposing that they had occupied the canal zone for a few months)? In 1956 the French (deliberately) and the British (without realising it) lent aid and assistance to the state of Israel. The leaders of that state judged that, in their situation, they ought to dispense with the luxury of moral scruples. A dozen years later, I still cannot resign myself to thinking they were right.

FROM THEN TILL NOW my commitment to France, and my feelings with regard to Israel, have not changed. The French reversal of alliances did not surprise me, even though it was carried out in a manner which was gratuitously offensive. I leave aside the calculations, of necessity indecisive, of profit and loss. I limit myself to analysing the interpretation of the crisis of last June which has been put forward by General de Gaulle; and this interpretation appears to me profoundly unjust or rather deliberately inaccurate.

To describe the affair of Aqaba as providing a "pretext" for those who hoped to benefit by it is to distort the facts; the Israeli government had repeatedly declared that it would not tolerate the closing of the Gulf of Aqaba while the Suez Canal was closed to Israeli ships. Nothing in our present state of knowledge justifies the statement that the state of Israel was waiting for an opportunity for conquest. Certainly there were men and groups, who hoped for such an opportunity. But the government in power, that of Mr. Levi Eshkol, took the opposite view. The Prime Minister, on the day when hostilities opened, denied all territorial ambitions.

Let me make myself plain. I do not wish to substitute one fiction for another. The Israelis are not angels any more than the Arabs are monsters (or the reverse). They confront each other in a conflict which they both tend more and more to regard as irredeemable. In April 1967, neither the Israelis nor President Nasser wished for or were preparing for war. The permanent tension was mounting progressively; Israeli reprisals answered Arab terrorism; the Syrian "progressives" made President Nasser ashamed of his inactivity. When States do not mutually accept each other's existence, and maintain on their frontiers a condition of insecurity not far from open war, I am full of envy for those who, from afar, claim to distinguish between what is justice and what is injustice, between "legitimate reprisals" and "excessive brutality." To the man of good will, everything in the Middle East is a monstrosity, the fate of the refugees certainly, as General de Gaulle has said, but also the bombardment of the *kibbutzim* by Syrian artillery, and the indoctrination in hatred in all Arab schools, and the threats of annihilation uttered against a state which is internationally recognised.

One would never come to the end of such scandals, but it remains true that in 1967 the steps which precipitated war, as clouds precipitate the rain storm, were taken by President Nasser. By closing the Gulf of Aqaba, he defied not merely Israel but the United States and Great Britain. He also defied France, which in 1957 had entered into solemn commitments to the state of Israel; he had probably been reassured in this respect beforehand by the representatives of General de Gaulle. This act of defiance still does not prove that President Nasser "wanted" war. The Austro-Hungarian government, when it sent an ultimatum to Serbia, and ordered the bombardment of Belgrade, defied Europe. But it probably did not want war, and certainly not the war which actually occurred. Perhaps President Nasser would have been satisfied with the diplomatic victory represented by the closing of the Gulf of Aqaba after the withdrawal of the United Nations force. But he knew—and his spokesman said so—that he had as it were challenged Israel to war. And, if he did not hope to win that war decisively, he hoped not to lose it. And for Egypt, it would have been enough to hold out for a few days in indecisive battles to win a victory which, under certain conditions, would have condemned Israel to death.

IS IT POSSIBLE to say that the Egyptian head of state could not have had aggressive intentions, given the actual balance of force as it was revealed on the battlefield? The objection cannot

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be sustained. Ask those who talked to General de Gaulle how he foresaw the course of events after Israel's initial successes. In Jerusalem, Mr. Ben-Gurion was in despair, and saw no hope either in accepting capitulation or in taking the risk of attacking. The Israeli ministers could not believe sworn statements of their air force commanders (who did not always convince even their military colleagues).

At the end of May 1967, as a result of challenge after challenge, mobilisation after mobilisation, the arbitrament of war was inevitable. I thought at the time, and I continue to think today, that the Israeli government no longer had any choice and that, under the circumstances, the major responsibility lay with their enemies. General de Gaulle had promised to intervene if Israel was in danger of annihilation. And, we are assured by M. Gorse, his Minister of Information, a promise by General de Gaulle is worth something. What help would he have sent to Israel, except *via* a press conference?

These were the feelings, last spring, of most Frenchmen, and of most Europeans (including socialist Europe, despite the official governmental attitudes). Probably these feelings have, with the passage of time, lost something of their original freshness and simplicity. We feared the destruction of a state, the extermination of a nation. Then suddenly this nation, created by a dispersed "people" which in the course of centuries had suffered every kind of persecution and had finally survived them, won an astonishing victory and, having saved its life, risked losing its soul. The soldiers of Israel became an occupation army.

TODAY EVERYONE ASKS the questions which no one asked in the first access of emotion. Did Israeli propaganda mobilise public opinion? Did it conjure up the fictitious danger of extermination in order to achieve its design of conquest?

It was the Arabs who created pro-Israeli "propaganda." Today, after the event, the threat of the Palestinian terrorists rings rather hollow. Today, no one listens to it; it has been drowned in the clash of armour and the desert sands, through which straggled the Egyptian soldiers, haggard, parched with thirst, who had been promised victory and a rendezvous in Tel Aviv with their Syrian comrades in all the joy of massacre and booty. *Today*, we think our emotions of yesterday exaggerated, but—I speak for myself—we do not renounce them. They were shared by millions, Jews and non-Jews, in Europe and America, in Warsaw and in Paris. But—I apologise to my Arab friends of Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and also Egypt (and I do not think I have lost their friendship) —we were mistaken about the military capabilities of the Egyptians, the Jordanians and the Syrians, *not* about the fate reserved for the Israelis if they were defeated, nor the fate which awaits them tomorrow if they should lose a battle. The Arabs can lose battle after battle in order to win the war in the end (they have time, space and numbers). Israel would lose the war and her existence if she lost a single battle. David beat Goliath for the third time, but he is still David, for the moment superior because of what today is called intelligence, the mastery of technique, but now as before without reserves or a defensive position. The besieged garrison has executed a well-conducted and successful sortie, but it continues to be besieged and will continue to be so perhaps for decades.

A DEAR FRIEND asked me whether there wasn't something equivocal, under certain circumstances even unpleasant, in the pro-Israeli enthusiasm of last June. "Indecent demonstrations," said a writer (in the *Tribune Libre* of *Le Monde* which one would not have thought any judge of decency). I agree. I did not like the youthful gangs shouting "Israel will win" in the Champs Elysées, nor the crowds in front of the Israeli Embassy. I did not like the adherents of *Algérie française* or those who still dreamed of the Suez expedition, pursuing the war against the Arabs through the intermediary of Israel. . . . Collective emotions assimilate the best and the worst; those who today set themselves up as judges of political good manners have not always and under all circumstances been sensitive to nuances. *Peu importe*. Let us accept the censure of men who last June never for a moment lost their heads, who never felt the slightest uneasiness about the life of the Israeli population and who, armed with statistics, compared the two-and-a-half million Jews collected in Palestine with the dozens of millions of Indians who eat just enough not to die of hunger. The Frenchmen, Jew and non-Jew, who last spring felt involved to the depth of their being by the fate of this small number have no reason to feel ashamed of their particular sympathy. Ought they to apologise? Who

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in France felt "involved" in the Indian-Pakistani conflict? The Israeli-Arab conflict distressed millions of Frenchmen (and Englishmen, Germans and Russians), not because of a "Jewish conspiracy" or through the influence of French Jews (or Jewish Frenchmen) talking on the radio or writing in the newspapers. In a civilisation suckled by Christianity, how could the fate of a people which gave birth to Christ fail to inspire feelings of distress in everyone, whether believers or non-believers? The people who refused to recognise the Saviour became, for century after century, the Christ among the peoples, its face covered with spittle—the people whom Voltaire (yes, Voltaire) accused of emitting a stink insupportable to Christian nostrils—until the day when the smoke of the death factories rose in the Germany of Mendelssohn and Nietzsche.

"You may be right," a man of goodwill might reply. "It is understandable that Christian Europe, which for twenty years has chosen to forget rather than understand, should have eased its conscience by condemning in advance the genocide with which it mistakenly believed Israel to be threatened. But shouldn't the French Jews—those who, like you, tell us they are and wish to be French citizens *comme les autres*, or those who, repatriated from French North Africa, have preferred France to Israel—have remained in the background and avoided any words or deeds which would give plausibility to the charge of 'double allegiance'? The events of those frenzied few days made inevitable the change of front which was not so much initiated as formulated by General de Gaulle...."

Quite right, my friend: wise as all men are when they tell others what they should think. It would have been better if.... The Jews should have.... That all goes without saying, I admit; after the sunshine of June, I expected the frost of winter. But those who shared in the pro-Israeli enthusiasm of the spring, tended in the autumn to reproach the Jews for the emotions which they themselves felt, though they were not Jews. We forget the fundamental fact which is the only explanation of the almost complete unanimity of the Jews of France: they felt a marvellous sense of joy because the majority of Frenchmen were on the side of Israel, so that French citizenship was reconciled with "Judaism." By demonstrating their attachment to Israel, they were not dividing themselves from Frenchmen; they were joining them. It was too good to last. The Jews themselves were beginning to believe in Father Christmas.

ONE OF MY FRIENDS, who like myself has lost his "Judaism," has raised another point. "Shouldn't we attribute the excessive pro-Israeli feeling, the 'indecent demonstrations,' to the newcomers, to the Jews who left North Africa after the countries of the Maghreb won their independence? The 'assimilated' Jews could not have been guilty of those lapses of taste which, rightly, annoyed the Head of State...." I hope my friend will forgive me, but such an argument makes me feel ashamed. It recalls sinister memories. In 1933, in debates in student clubs in Berlin, how often I heard German Nazi speakers invite Jewish listeners to repudiate their "co-religionists" who had recently arrived from Poland, or at least to keep their distance from them. One must draw the line, they said superciliously; a Jew who had been German for generations was one thing, those *Polaks* loaded with all the sins of both the Poles and the Jews were something quite different.

What does my friend take me for? I could never accept so ignoble an argument. As a sociologist, obviously, I cannot ignore differences which men and communities have acquired during centuries of history. I have more in common with a French anti-Semite than with a Jew from the south of Morocco who speaks nothing but Arabic and has hardly emerged from what seems to me the Middle Ages, or rather, the impenetrable darkness of a radically different culture. But on the day when the Prince declares that the Jews of the Diaspora form *"un peuple sûr de lui-même et dominateur,"* I have no choice left. Only children defend themselves by blaming others: *It wasn't me, it was him.*

LET ME return to last June. I have just said: the almost total unanimity of the Jewish community. Now this community does not exist as such; it has no organisation, and it cannot and should not have one. I do not know the percentage of practising and non-practising members of those whom the Vichy government designated as Jews or who continue to belong to the "domineering people." But no Jew whom I know regards himself as represented by the *Consistoire* or the United Jewish Fund. The first is a civil association connected with

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religion and the synagogue. The second is a charitable and social welfare organisation. Neither the one nor the other constitutes a pressure group. The magazine *L'Arche* does not reflect the feelings of the totality of French Jewry; for reasons which may be regrettable but are understandable, its editors belong to the minority of French Jews who are passionately attached to Israel out of religious conviction, Zionism, or their loyalty to specific traditions in which nation, culture and religion are all united.

The Jews of France, for the most part, do not even know of the existence of *L'Arche*. They have the greatest possible variety of opinions on every subject; some belong *à la gauche*, some *à la droite*. Some have made a cult of General de Gaulle; among intellectuals of the Left who are of Jewish origin, there are many anti-Gaullists, but their attitude is much more like that of other Leftist intellectuals than of other Jews. In short, the opinions of French Jews are reflected by the different parties more or less as other Frenchmen's are—though perhaps with the reservation that the Jews preserve a kind of instinctive loyalty to the ideas of 1789 and the parties which derive from them: because they owe their "liberation" to them. It may perhaps be admitted that a Jew does not have to belong to *L'Action Française* in order to prove citizenship. All the same, many Jews had ambivalent feelings about Marshal Pétain and the Vichy government. Before that, there were German Jews who hoped for a National Socialism minus anti-Semitism....

Why recall such well-known facts? Because we have returned to a time when what goes without saying is even better when it is said. For there is one thing which we must understand; the impression given to French public opinion that, suddenly, the French Jews, dispersed throughout the nation, form a single bloc. A false impression? In one respect, certainly. *Le Monde* has published letters in which Jews expressed feelings hostile to Israel and denounced military aggression. Jewish pacifists did not cease to be pacifists when Israel took up arms. In the special issue devoted to the Israeli-Arab conflict by *Les Temps Modernes*, the best article on the Arab side was written by a Jew whose solitude inspires my respect. (The Jews reject him; the Arabs do not adopt him as their own; and the French, pro- or anti-Israel, regard him with suspicion: Christ or Judas?)

2

But when this has been said, it remains true that the Jews of France have for the first time given the impression of forming some kind of single community. Of course, many protested against the letter of Edmond de Rothschild, recalling the ancient practice of a tax paid by the Jews throughout the world in order to come to the assistance of their endangered brothers in a far-off and unknown land. The intellectuals of the Left felt uneasy in the company of the Barons of international finance. The role played by the Rothschilds or, more generally, by the rich, in Jewish organisations is rooted in centuries of history. Would the Jews who condemn or deplore their role agree to give up their time to working for the *Consistoire* (although they have lost their faith) or for the United Jewish Fund (to which they send their contributions out of human charity)?

Bourgeois or intellectual, the majority of French Jews are today Jewish Frenchmen. In times of peace, they think little of their "Judaism" of which they are not even aware and which they assert in relation to others only out of self-respect. They get irritated or annoyed when the Israelis reproach them for deserting Judaism or for accepting assimilation. Why should they owe loyalty to religion when they have lost their faith, or to traditions partly imposed on them by their environment. The dialogue between assimilated (or de-judaised) Jews and Jews attached in differing ways to the traditions of their parents is often not very pleasant, and I speak from experience.

How, under the influence of a collective emotion, were such incompatible attitudes which set Jew against Jew reconciled? Even to answer such a question will divide Jew from Jew; I have no illusions on this point. Those of my "co-religionists" who have remained authentically Jewish interpret my adherence to Israel according to the rules of their own mental universe. In their view, my "Judaism," repressed for many years by my determination to be totally French, suddenly burst out, destroying the barriers erected by abstract reason. I do not claim to understand the ultimate motivation of my attitudes any better than anyone else. Anyone, Zionist or anti-Semite, is free to interpret my remarks as they like. As for me, I hold to what my own subjective experience tells me.

I have never been a Zionist, primarily and above all because I have never felt my-

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self to be Jewish. It seemed to me likely that the state of Israel, by its mere existence, would provoke prolonged conflict. I do not feel any more obliged today than I was yesterday to support unconditionally the policies of the few men —no better and no worse than those who govern elsewhere—who exercise authority in the state of Israel. But I also know, more clearly than yesterday, that the mere possibility of the destruction of the state of Israel (which would be accompanied by the massacre of part of its population) wounds me to the depths of my being. In this sense, I am confessing that a Jew will never achieve perfect objectivity when Israel comes into question. (Non-objectivity also characterises the attitude of quite other circles.)

The intellectuals of the Left underwent the same experience, even more agonising for them than for me. Zionism, "a phenomenon of colonialism"; Israel, "an advanced base of imperialism"; such formulae, used and abused by the Communists, come spontaneously to minds confined in a certain intellectual system. The philosophy of history implicit in progressive thought places Syria on the right side and Israel, which owes its standard of life partly to American subsidies, on the wrong side of the barricades. The leaders in Damascus employ the same language as the Paris intelligentsia: they denounce the war in Viet Nam, Johnson, Capitalism. The leaders in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv give their citizens more bread and more liberty, but deny themselves the luxury of ideological pronouncements. Perhaps, deep within themselves, they condemn the war in Viet Nam (one can't be sure), but they do not say so, nor even whisper it.

I will go even further. If there is such a thing as the "imperialist camp," a group of countries closely allied and responding to the same inspiration if not to the same orders, how can one deny that Israel forms part of it? The security of the Jewish state depends on the American Sixth Fleet: not that it has fought the Arabs but that, by its mere presence, it has neutralised Soviet power, limited the theatre of operations, and made possible the strange campaign in which Jewish soldiers came off best. Did the Israeli victory mean one more success to the credit of "American imperialism"? Yes and No. President Johnson did not know how to discharge the commitment undertaken by his predecessor. He was delighted that Israel did not need him in order to reopen the Gulf of Aqaba to navigation. The crisis gave him the opportunity to test the American-Soviet *entente*, implicitly intended to settle any crisis which might threaten the peace of the world. Nevertheless, he did not order or foresee the opening of hostilities. As for the final balance, it did not only have a credit side. The Soviet Union now has a more solid position than ever in the Eastern Mediterranean, and posesses bases on which Czarist Russia long ago cast envious eyes. The Soviet Fleet, though still inferior to the American Sixth Fleet, has been progressively reinforced.

In the poker game of world diplomacy Israel is—why deny it?—*bon gré mal gré* an American card, in no way an American satellite but provisionally the object of American protection and Soviet hostility. And the leaders of the Arab countries hate her all the more because they now speak in a "progressive" language. For the government in Jerusalem, despite or because of the socialist-revolutionary tradition of its first leaders, now look like democrats, like European Social Democrats, at least as regards their management of economic affairs and the style of political debate. A European statesman finds immediately that he and they speak a common language, while very often it costs him infinite trouble to understand the leaders of the Arab states and to distinguish in their pronouncements between rhetoric and action, dream and reality.

Finally, no one, except out of fanaticism or blindness, will ever find himself entirely in one camp or in the other as a result of appealing to universal principles, or choosing between good and evil, as Left intellectuals like to do. Both sides have a well-prepared brief, loaded with impeccable arguments. To the Arabs, the mere existence of Israel constitutes an aggression, an iniquity, a humiliation, as on the day when it began. But the Israelis have fructified the earth, given shelter to the Jewish minorities driven out of the Arab countries, constructed a State, struggled with nature and translated into a secular reality the promises of a religion in which many of them no longer believed and to which they all remained mysteriously attached. A tragic confrontation, and yet no one resigns himself to the part of a pure onlooker.

WILL IT EVER be otherwise? Who could help having doubts about any of the battles fought in the jungle where the cold

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monsters roam? An Israeli student recently questioned me about a passage in the *Mémoires* of Simone de Beauvoir; she says, it seems, that I had justified the conduct of the British authorities in the case of the *Exodus*. I, too, remember our conversation. One day, in the Café de Flore, Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were angrily passing sentence on the crimes of the British. I remarked that, between the Jews and the Arabs, they did not have an easy task; the British hadn't created the conflict but it was theirs to arbitrate; at that time, Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre, emotional and indignant, always searching for some simple distinguishing mark between angels and devils, could only see the cruelty (or the imperialism) of the British and the sacred cause of the martyred. What I saw—and who, thinking of the future, would not have seen it?—was an Israeli-Arab war after the departure of the British, unable to impose any kind of peace or to reconcile the conflicting claims, which were all legitimate but contradictory.

The Left intellectuals of Jewish origin have not abandoned the ground of universalism in favour of Israeli nationalism (as J.-M. Domenach has rather uncharitably suggested). They have undergone Albert Camus' experience. In certain circumstances, the intellectual will find it impossible to come to a conclusion on rational grounds by assessing the *pro* and the *contra*, balancing one case against another and applying the abstract rules of justice. Then he will either say nothing, or obey his instinct. This is what the intellectuals of the Left, Jewish or non-Jewish, did last June. But they were ready to return, the next day, to reading their usual daily paper.

Were the Jews converted to the defence of Israel in greater numbers and more passionately than the non-Jews? Certainly they were. Were they therefore, once again, "suspect"? It may be. But to themselves they will take on the condition of suspects.

Let us try to put the problem in reasonable terms, if, that is, reason has any chance of being heard under present circumstances.

I do not dream of denying—and I should deplore it if things were otherwise—that the majority of Jews, even if they were previously hostile to Zionism, have a special sympathy for Israel. What degree of sympathy are we allowed before incurring the charge of double allegiance? I ask this of my fellow countrymen, and I would even put it to General de Gaulle (if he were still willing to enter into a dialogue).

I take the following historical parallels from a letter to the *Nouveau Candide* written by "a Frenchman without reservation and unashamedly an Israelite in religious matters."

> Under the Restoration, French liberals, among them Armand Carrel, once a cadet at Saint-Cyr, fought in the ranks of the Junta against the French army. During the war of independence in Greece, Colonel Favier and several of his companions in arms under the Empire fought on the side of the Greek insurgents. During the Polish insurrections of 1830 and 1864, public opinion was pro-Polish, though the Government was neutral. . . . Under the Second Empire, French Catholics served and fought with the Papal forces. At the beginning of the Third Republic, the French Catholics fought both in Parliament and in the country for the temporal power of the Pope. . . . Nobody reproached them for being Catholics. . . . During the Spanish Civil War, hundreds of Frenchmen fought in the ranks of the Republicans and those of Franco. . . . If, tomorrow, the F.L.N. in Viet Nam accepted volunteers, there would be Frenchmen among them.

I can already hear the reply: "But all that was quite different." Of course, things are never exactly the same. The case of the Jewish "people" is not like any other. I accept the concept of a Jewish people because on this point the Zionists agree with General de Gaulle. But, as applied to the Jews, the concept of a people has a special significance. The Jews of the Diaspora were not the descendants of those who lived in Palestine in Biblical times; they form a quasi-people in virtue of a religious tradition and the fate imposed on them in the course of centuries. A Jew who has ceased to believe or to practise is not even obliged to accept the concept of "a Jewish people."

"Then why do you accept it?", asks a critic, a Frenchman like myself but who listens with a certain irony to these rabbinical ratiocinations. To tell the truth, I am myself not quite certain. As long as I remain rational, I can find no decisive reason for reproaching a French Jew for his fundamental detachment from his "co-religionists," if he has ceased to believe, or from the Israelis, if he wishes to be exclusively French, or Gaullist, or Communist. But *on one condition* only: that he does not push his desire for intellectual comfort so far as to deny the evidence; in the eyes of others he also belongs *"à ce peuple d'élite, sûr de lui-même et dominateur."*

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I myself do not reach this point of detachment, and I do not wish to, in spite of what I have written elsewhere. And once again, I do not refuse to others the right to interpret my motives differently from myself. An unbeliever, like Spinoza, of the kind which pious Jews like least, I am in my religious feelings nearer to a Christian or a Buddhist than one of my "co-religionists." I ought perhaps, if I followed my own logic to its conclusion, to stand aside from these quarrels which begin with verbal subtleties and end sometimes in blood; but I refuse to follow it. *Citoyen français*, I claim the right, granted to every citizen, to combine loyalty to the national state with liberty in my convictions and sympathies. For the believing Jew, Israel means something entirely different from what it does to me; but I should despise myself if I left him to defend alone a liberty which I could do without much more easily than he can.

"Aren't you providing arguments to your opponents? If you, who never go to the synagogue—who look at the Wailing Wall in the same way as at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—react with hardly controlled passion, how can you prevent anti-Semites from drawing the conclusion that a Jew is always primarily a Jew and only secondarily a Frenchman?...." Perhaps it is true that I am in fact providing anti-Semites with arguments. How can one tell? There are circumstances in which everything one does is a mistake. Someone else might object that silence would look like cowardice and that the first surrender brings all the others in its train. For me there is only one question: is the sympathy felt by the great majority of the Jews of France for Israel to be imputed to them as "a crime," to believers in the first place, and then to the others? Are they to be asked, as certain Elysée-ologists have suggested, to make not merely a choice which they have already made, but a *total* choice? No state accepts double loyalty (though French law has allowed many Jews to become Israelis without losing French citizenship), but only a totalitarian state demands a loyalty which excludes every other allegiance. The Jews of the Soviet Union have known for many years, and the Polish Jews since last June, that they will never be accepted as Jews in a theocracy or an ideocracy.

The Fifth Republic will not become a theocracy or an ideocracy but France, Gallican or Jacobin, eliminates, by persuasion or otherwise, religious differences and divisions of language or culture. The Bretons no more learn Celtic in school than the Basques their mother tongue. French schools "de-judaise" the Jews with extraordinary efficiency. But France has not suppressed diversity of political opinion—a diversity which, historically regarded, seems to me the response to the effort, always renewed and always fruitless, to achieve spiritual unity. I know hardly any Jews who are unconditionally loyal to the state of Israel as Communists are (or have been) to the Soviet Union. Their sympathy with a small and threatened state does not compromise French security. It does not even prevent the French government from signing contracts with Iraq in order to take the place of British companies (all perfectly in accordance with the rules of the game). It would not even be sufficient to provoke a revival of the anti-Semitism which is always latent if General de Gaulle, with a handful of resounding words, had not officially rehabilitated it.

WHY DID HE do it? To give himself the pleasure of causing a scandal? To punish the Israelis for their disobedience and the Jews for their occasional anti-Gaullism? To pronounce a solemn interdict on any inclination to double loyalty? To sell a few more *Mirages* to the Arab countries? Was he aiming at the U.S.A. in striking at the Jews? Did he wish to impose a new test of unconditional obedience on some of his followers who had suffered under Charles de Gaulle? Was he acting as the descendant of Louis XIV who would not tolerate Protestants? As the heir of the Jacobins who loved liberty so much that they forbade citizens to feel devotion to any other cause? I do not know the answer. I only know that any form of nationalism, pushed beyond a certain point, ends by presenting some Jews (of whom I am not one but whom I would not wish to desert) with the alternatives between refusal or apostasy.

Will Gaullist nationalism tomorrow cross that threshold? Does the press conference represent a mild equivalent of the purge carried out by Mr. Gomulka in Poland in order to punish certain doubters? Perhaps the coming summer will bring us an answer.

THE EVENTS of last June belong to the past. The Six Days War is a part of history. Today the Arabs, by the excess of their

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misfortunes and their humiliations, demand our compassion. This long essay, which will not completely satisfy anyone, is not meant to revive the passions of last spring. Like every man with a heart I would wish to make a contribution to peace. I detest the idea of an Israeli protectorate on the banks of the Jordan. I question, like many Israelis, the wisdom of the policy followed by the government in Jerusalem since 12 June. But, so long as the war continues, I do not feel I have "the right to judge," as the President of Egypt has himself said. For in the last analysis the Israelis have drawn from the last crisis the bitter conclusion that, in the hour of danger, they can only depend on themselves.

France's adherence to the Arab cause, the encouragement given by General de Gaulle to the Syrian extremists, the indifference, if not the sympathy, exhibited by French diplomacy with regard to Soviet penetration into the Eastern (and tomorrow the Western) Mediterranean, will not help either the maintenance of the balance of power or progressive pacification. Today, the logic of French diplomacy seems to show that it prefers a Soviet to an American hegemony; at the least, it counts on Soviet power to reduce American influence. Such manoeuvres, which may perhaps bring France some material advantage, make the prospect of a settlement recede into the future. They tie Israel even more closely to the United States, for the Americans are now asked to supply the modern airplanes which have been bought and paid for in France but of which General de Gaulle forbids the delivery.

Nothing and no one can prevent the President of the Republic from going still further on the same path. Communists (out of anti-imperialism) and Gaullists (out of nationalism and hostility to Israel) will act together. The circle of suspicion will close around those who are considered responsible for the hesitations of public opinion.

I do not know whether this is a nightmare or what lies in the immediate future. Perhaps other words will efface the fatal ones which have already been spoken; or perhaps those fatal words will assume a definite, imperative meaning. It is not a moment for fear or for hope but for explanation, without arrogance and without false humility. Under such circumstances the Jews, like all heterogeneous minorities united only by exterior pressure, are tempted to quarrel among themselves. Let them accept the inevitable diversity of their emotional reactions and together claim the rights of free citizens of a free country; neither more, nor less.

One last word. I have heard it suggested that certain criticisms and certain protests were inspired by "anti-Gaullism," as if René Cassin or François Jacob might be thought guilty of anti-Gaullism. Those who accuse others of such motives must have mean minds. General de Gaulle has his place in the history of France. Every Frenchman, Gaullist or not, Jew or non-Jew, hopes passionately that for the man of the *Dix-huit Juin* old age will not turn into shipwreck.

How many Jews, in France and elsewhere, wept after that *conférence de presse*, not because they feared persecution but because they had lost their hero! How many still hope to recover what they have lost!

What has been said cannot be unsaid. But tomorrow either explanation or silence will establish the ultimate meaning of the few words which, in part at least, will define the last stage of Gaullism.

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David Thomson

Must History Stay Nationalist?

The Prison of Closed Intellectual Frontiers

BENEDETTO CROCE remarked some forty years ago that all history is contemporary history. It would be truer to say now that all history is nationalist history, and especially that all contemporary history is nationalist history. This runs so contrary to what many people seem to believe that evidence for it must be presented. It comes from three different sources: from surveys of the general sweep of historical writing since 1945; from an exploration of the research into contemporary history undertaken in different countries; and from several experiments in studying and writing history on a non-nationalist basis. Nationalist—even nationalistic—historiography is a highly significant feature of our culture in the 1960s. It is ubiquitous if not quite universal, and it shows no sign of receding. The accumulative force of the evidence for such generalisations compels a further question: can historical study, at least in our modern society, have much educational or intellectual value unless it is based on a continuous community consciousness as well-defined and as positive as that of a modern nation?

Several major countries produce bibliographies of historical works published in the years since 1945, comparable with the Historical Association's *Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature* which has been appearing since 1911. They list works about the main countries in several different languages. But the French, guided by their *Comité français des sciences scientifiques*, have tackled the job most systematically.[1] Even so, the compiler of the admirable bibliography which forms the second volume of *Ving-cinq ans de recherche historique en France* felt obliged to apologise lest he had inadvertently let in works—written in French—by Belgian, Swiss, or Canadian historians. Of the 6,460 titles there listed, all but some 3,000 are on modern history, the great majority being about aspects of French history. When broader themes—the general history of Europe, or cultural aspects, or overseas history—are handled there is a strong tendency to approach them from a particularly French slant.

Would a similar compilation of the output of historians in other countries during the last twenty years reveal similar trends? For modern history, even for medieval or ancient history, it probably would. South Africa is, significantly, an extreme case where obsessive nationalism keeps the eyes of research-workers fixed on such well-worn themes as the Great Trek or the Boer War, and within the confines of a brief span of time. Certainly American and British historiography does not lack a comparable bias toward homeland history, a certain priority for national themes and an underlying faith that history, like charity, should begin at home. There are notable exceptions in both countries. Eminent American historians have made original contributions to the study of France (Robert Palmer, Gordon Wright, Henry Ehrmann) or of Germany (Gordon Craig, Hajo Holborn). In post-war Britain John Elliott at Cambridge, Raymond Carr at Oxford, have produced masterly studies of Spanish history; E. H. Carr is still writing his massive *History of Soviet Russia*; Denis Brogan, Richard Cobb,

[1] *Vingt-cinq ans de recherche historique en France, 1940–1965* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 2 vols. 1965), Vol. II, *Bibliographie*. Comparable bibliographies from other countries are mentioned in *Problèmes de la recherche en histoire contemporaine* (Strasbourg, 1966).

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and Alfred Cobban have made valuable contributions to the study of France, even to that proud preserve of the French, their own *Révolution*. It may be true that there is no Leopold von Ranke in Germany to be magisterial about 17th-century England, no Élie Halévy in modern France to encompass so wide a sweep of 19th-century Britain. But such phenomena were never common, and there are few these days who write on this scale about even their own countries.

THERE ARE OBVIOUS ENOUGH reasons for some concentration on one's own national history. The sources are most readily to hand, in languages one is most likely to know and in accessible archives. Academic training in research, especially when it accompanies part-time employment, tends to be strongest on home materials. The beginner feels at home—and having begun may never find the time or opportunity to shift his focus abroad. All these circumstances favour a choice of national themes, quite apart from any nationalistic urge to explore deeper the origins and development of the society to which the historian inevitably belongs. Deterrents to mastering the history of another nation may be financial, or linguistic, or a dozen other things apart from temperamental aversion. They are real and operative, nonetheless, and need strong inducements to offset them. Whereas most universities offer positive incentives to study the language or literature of other countries, few offer more than facilities—if that—to undertake serious research into the history of other people.

THE CURRENT FASHION in historical studies in most Western countries is to widen their scope and diversify their interests: so that emphasis is placed much less predominantly on political, constitutional or military history (with a presumed propensity to cast it in a firm nationalistic mould), and much more on economic, intellectual and scientific history (which of necessity transcends national frontiers). It might be expected that one consequence of this new focus would be to loosen the grip of nationalism on historiography. This expectation has not yet been fulfilled. The investigation of economic changes, or of intellectual and scientific developments, has often been attuned to more traditional concentration upon national history.

Nor is this surprising. New fields of historical enquiry, demanding fresh techniques and use of less familiar materials, are again most readily pursued in native archives and on home ground. There are plenty of new questions of interest and importance to be answered there—how economic changes interact with political or social changes, what impact new ideas or new scientific developments have had on national life, how external relations of the state have been affected by growth of a world economy or by the endowments of modern technology. Traditional features of national history, instead of seeming out-of-date or threadbare, acquire fresh interest and vitality.

For these reasons and others, the basic subject of study has usually remained the national community, in its more varied internal developments and in its changing external relations. The most striking exceptions are a few regional studies, such as Fernand Braudel's famous *Le Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris, 1949), or histories of the large international movements or organisations, ranging from Sir Steven Runciman's *History of the Crusades* (3 vols.) to F. P. Walters' *History of the League of Nations* (2 vols., 1952). Diplomatic history, the study of international relations, and much that is written about international organisation, peacemaking or warmaking, are inevitably national in basis even when multi-national in scope: and works on these themes have abounded.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN expected, too, that the increasing attention given by serious scholars to "contemporary" or 20th-century history would have further encouraged a choice of themes other than national, and treatment other than nationalistic. Never before have events anywhere so quickly had effects on events everywhere. Human fortunes in one area of the world are intimately linked with those in other areas, when the twin threats of world starvation and of nuclear war hang over mankind. Contemporary history must, in a special sense be world history. It must be studied and written in a global context before it can be fully intelligible. The pivots of contemporary history are those of world history—such moments as 1917 or 1929 or 1941 when great displacements of world power take place and history flows into new channels. All this being so, concern with the study of contemporary history, more than of

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any earlier period, might have been expected to bring an escape from the essentially nationalist basis of most historiography. But again the expectation has not been fulfilled.

The Journal of Contemporary History recently devoted a whole issue (January, 1967) to exploring trends in the writing of contemporary history in the United States, France, Italy, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Spain, Poland, Czechoslovakia and India. The most recurrent single refrain was that writers of contemporary history seldom undertake serious study of countries other than their own. "French historians in general take little interest in other countries," laments M. René Rémond. Italian historiography, notes Professor Claudio Pavone, gives "scanty attention to the world beyond Italy," adding that "the only comprehensive history of united Italy to have appeared since the war is the work of an Englishman" (Mr. Dennis Mack Smith). Professor Hans Herzfeld records that

> the great debate over the "wrong turnings" taken by German historians has for the last decade restricted all work almost exclusively to problems of German history, and to the revision of the German concept of history.

Dr. Krister Wahlbäck states bluntly that "one conspicuous feature of Swedish research in contemporary history is its parochialism"; while from beyond the iron curtain Dr. Frantisek Ryszka adds, "one can rightly criticise the Poles for their half-hearted interest in questions which do not directly concern Poland," and Karel Bartosek emphasizes the danger in Czechoslovakia of "a national, provincial, limited outlook" with the consequent "inability to make a genuine comparison, an uncritical and subservient adulation of the national entity."

Recalling the experience common to so many European nations this century, the experience of war, economic slump, invasion, occupation, resistance, liberation, rehabilitation, this chorus of assent from professional historians themselves that even among students of this century's history "all history is nationalist history" is both surprising and disturbing. Despite the cold war, despite the movements towards federalism, integration and wider horizons, European culture in this important respect remains rooted in national identity. And if the old nations of Europe perpetuate such separatism, it is hardly surprising that the new nationalities of Africa or Asia search fervently for distinctive nationalist roots, recalling the notion of Fontenelle that history is only "a fable that men have agreed upon."

BEFORE these tendencies, however, are lamented too loudly or condemned as mere regression, it may be asked whether more prolonged and profound research into national sources, using modern approaches and techniques, may not yield rich benefits, intellectually and culturally. Reinvigorated by new methods and ideas, historical studies are enriching human knowledge in many fields; and nothing is lost by deeper understanding of our national communities. National society investigated, and its history written, with a nationalistic bias may be as blameworthy as neglect by historians of non-nationalist themes: but firmer understanding of national history enhanced by more versatile researches is entirely gain.[2] What we need is not less national history but more trans-national historiography: more studies of national history by historians who "belong" to other nations; more pursuit of themes common to several nations or to a whole region, such as Robert Palmer's controversial *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800* (2 vols. Princeton, 1959–64); assessments of scientific and technological changes more distinctively historical than any hitherto accomplished. But of grandiose collective or "collaborationist" undertakings in these fields, let us be unceasingly wary.

THREE SUCH have been attempted since 1945, each seeking by means of multi-national authorship to overcome both the hurdle of specialisation and the bane of nationalism. The Cambridge University Press is nearing completion of its 12-volume *New Cambridge Modern History*, with its focus on European civilisation since 1493. The Italian firm of Marzorati presents a 6-volume history of Europe since 1815 (*L'Europe du XIXe et du XXe siècle*) inspired in large measure by "the European idea." The International Commission of UNESCO for a "History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind" has produced three of its six

[2] For exemplification of these trends see the three issues of the *Times Literary Supplement* devoted to "New Ways in History" (7 April, 28 July, and 8 September 1966). The trends were described in an editorial as "the general explosion of the subject over the past decade."

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volumes (some of the "volumes" running to two or three separately-bound and very substantial books), including a final volume (in two parts) on *The Twentieth Century*. Comparison of the approaches, methods and achievements of these three experiments in composite and multi-national writing of history, especially of recent history, throws further light on the incorrigible nationalism of historiography in our times.

Sir George Clark, general editor of the *New Cambridge Modern History*, defined its theme as

> that "civilisation" which, from the fifteenth century, spread from its original European homes, assimilating extraneous elements as it expanded, until it was more or less firmly planted in all parts of the world.

As regards method, he laid down that

> when there is a common process affecting a number of states or nations, this will provide the theme; but where necessary there will be separate chapters or sections for the affairs of nations or groups of nations which diverge too markedly to be treated along with others.

He added that "the History will not give separate continuous accounts of all the separate states; it will neither be nor include a collection of separate national histories bound together in the same covers." The contributors have been drawn almost entirely from the Western world, especially from Britain and the United States. Although the cries of outrage which have greeted most volumes have been much exaggerated, few would regard the experiment as a whole as outstandingly successful in the aim of presenting what Sir George Clark called "an articulated history."[3]

The aim of the Marzorati volumes is more didactic, just as the scope of the work, both in period and in geographical area, is narrower. The work starts from the assumption: *la nationalité en Europe est un fait acquis, un point de départ et non plus un point d'arrivée*. Its aim is to enlist wide international collaboration in an effort to extract from recent historiography in each country an agreed level of historical interpretation of the development of European civilisation. The distinguished contributors from many European countries—nearly a hundred in all—failed to include communist historians, so the editors had to fall back on Western historians to write about Russian history. Although contributors agreed to present their allotted themes on a common pattern, they evidently differed greatly in how they interpreted this pattern: and some ignored it completely. The result is no less patchy than the Cambridge History.[4]

The UNESCO enterprise is by far the most ambitious and comprehensive of the three. It is presented by the Director-General as belonging to "that noble line of great syntheses which seek to present to man the sum total of his memories as a coherent whole." One purpose is to demonstrate the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" mentioned in the Preamble to UNESCO's Constitution. The demonstration is expected to follow from the "two-fold ambition, to embrace the past in its entirety and to sum up all that we know about the past": a remarkable ambition, perpetuating a 19th-century positivist conception of history which few modern historians would care to endorse.[5] Each volume is equipped with its own little team of "author-editors," whose task it has been to produce "a joint, not a composite, piece of work." Chapters and sections, drafted by them or by specific collaborators, have been worked over jointly and represent "combined thought and judgment." Thus the volume on the 20th century had as author-editors an American, a Dutchman and an Indian (though the two latter unfortunately died during the completion of the work); half a dozen other people, mostly scientists rather than historians and all of them English-speaking, drafted particular chapters; and two consultants (an Ameri-

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[3] *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. I (1957), pp. xxxv–xxxvi. By May 1968, nine out of the twelve volumes had appeared: they varied greatly in quality, both from volume to volume, and from chapter to chapter within each volume. Many contributors evidently experienced some agony of mind in trying to be multi-national, while others scarcely tried to be. With this approach may be contrasted that of Mr. J. E. Morpurgo as Editor of *The Pelican History of the World*. He defends the plan of separate national histories on the grounds that "the old and familiar emphasis upon national history has meant sufficient to justify its continuance in this series," which he hopes, nevertheless, will be "in the true sense, a history of the modern world." Surrenders to nationalism can take various forms.

[4] *L'Europe du XIXe et du XXe siècle* (6 vols., Milan, 1959–). Heavy emphasis on debates among historians introduces a strange atmosphere of unreality, as if the untidiness of history were being deplored because this makes historiography more difficult. History—even national history—does not happen for the sake of historians—even nationalists.

[5] *History of Mankind: Cultural and Scientific Development* (6 vols., Allen & Unwin, London).

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can and a Russian) were appointed to add notes to the text already revised in the light of comments collected from the National and the International Commissions. It is these notes, especially, which "reflect many of the divergencies that characterise historical scholarship with respect to fundamental issues in the 20th century."

TAKEN TOGETHER WITH the comparable notes in earlier volumes, they reveal at least three different levels of dissent, all of them rooted in important differences of national culture.

There is the normal scholarly dispute between historians who take differing views of how events should be interpreted, usually involving technical and erudite arguments. This form of dissent is the least objectionable and the least aligned to distinctions of nationality: an example being the "Note on the Origins of the Etruscans" contributed by Mr. W. M. Frederiksen to Professor Luigi Pareti's chapter on "The Ancient World." There is, secondly, the protest based on downright patriotic considerations, and examples are quite numerous.

> László Mátrai, Corresponding Member, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, writes that it is incorrect to say the non-Euclidean spaces were first studied by followers of Corrado Segre, whose work was based on that of Hermann Grassman. It is generally acknowledged that the first in the field were Bolyai and Lobachevsky. (Vol. VI, Part I, p. 162.)

There is, thirdly, and most plentifully of all, the dissent based on a fundamentally different ideological approach: and this makes the notes following many chapters some of the most fascinating reading of all. For while the Chinese were totally excluded from the UNESCO undertaking, the Soviet Union participated only after the basic plans had been agreed. Even in the chapters on food and agriculture, desperately little is said about China; and on such delicate matters as Lysenko and Stalin mention is discreet to the point of being meaningless. As latecomers, the Soviet historians and scientists were given especially loose rein in the notes, and they made full use of it. The notes range from full-scale *exposés* of the materialist dialectic and the Marxist-Leninist doctrines about history, to the detailed application of such theories to religion, science, demography, and the arts, as well as to economics and politics. The differences emerge as no mere diversities of emphasis or selection, but basic conflicts of understanding.

> Candidate of Biological Sciences L. Ya. Blyakher expresses astonishment and concern that the authors should apparently be inclined to question whether all biological phenomena are at all times susceptible to a materialist explanation.

Such a clash arises about the concepts of nationalism itself:

> Candidate of Philosophical Sciences E. D. Modrzhinskaya cannot agree with the way in which the authors treat the concepts of "nation" and "nationalism." ... Historical materialism teaches that the nation is an historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. ... Soviet scholars take the view that nationalism is the expression of the policy of the bourgeoisie in the form of ideas and concepts, and that it reflects the attitude of the bourgeoisie to its own nation and to other nations; in other words, nationalism is a constituent element of bourgeois ideology. (Vol. VI, Part I, p. 54.)

The most interesting characteristic of the Soviet notes is the merger they reveal of Marxist ideology with national pride: a feature casting solemn doubt on the official Soviet description of nationalism just quoted. The Soviet commentators are touchy and edgy to a remarkable degree: which may explain, on one hand, the total omission of any clear statement that the Nazi-Soviet Pact led to the partition of Poland, and on the other to the effrontery with which the Soviet-Polish Pact of December 1941 is actually quoted as evidence that

> the first of the Powers belonging to the anti-Hitler coalition to declare officially that it was necessary to set up a new international organisation was the Soviet Union" (Vol. VI, Part I, p. 55).

IN THE REALM OF SCIENCE it was, doubtless, of high educational value for both Western and Communist writers to discover, from the dialogue between text and notes, how divergent their national cultures had become. The Soviet commentators repeatedly attack Freud and the "semi-scientific concept of the unconscious" and labour under the impression that "Freudianism is only popular in the U.S.A." Even in physics and mathematics, there appear divergent arguments, mingled with the complaint that "no information is given about the achievements of Soviet physics." It is evident that Western science and Soviet science are not identical. And on such dominant 20th-century issues as popu-

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lation the Western authors are attacked on two fronts, by the Italian Roman Catholics for assuming that control of births is the main solution, and by the Russian Communists for writing "based on neo-Malthusian theories."

> Professor Vittorio Marcozzi finds the Author-Editors lacking in this chapter [the biological sciences] in consideration for the importance of Divine plans and Divine intervention, of the distinction between man and the rest of nature, or of what he calls the "philosophical aspect."

Indeed, only on such matters as the growth of transport and communications is there an absence of fundamental disagreement.

To the inherent difficulties of intellectual comprehension, with such contrasting basic assumptions in mind, are added more superficial impediments, such as sheer linguistics. Time and again the author-editors have to point out that the writers of comments attribute to the text statements or ideas which are not there. One would have thought that within the massive resources of UNESCO such misunderstanding might have been successfully ironed out without surviving into the thousands of pages of these volumes. And if not there—what hope is there for less ambitious writers of history?[6]

IN ALL THESE RESPECTS, the major experiments in writing collaborationist histories can scarcely be said to have overcome the bane of nationalism. They have done a service by bringing the realities to the surface and by showing their far-reaching power. They have exposed unsuspected depths of disagreement, which cannot be resolved by anodyne phrases or formulae. The unhappy author-editors have performed prodigies of synthesis and tactful exercises in comprehension, though the full inclusion of China would certainly have disrupted still more of these. But in the end what is significant, and of the liveliest interest, is not the measure of agreement so much as the residual areas of dispute. Does this ungrateful conclusion imply that the very attempt to attain a master-synthesis—the expectation that any rounded interpretation of the whole of history, or even of 20th-century history alone, might be universally accepted—was mistaken?

The hackneyed controversy which raged at the beginning of this century, whether historiography was a Science or an Art, is widely taken to be dead, at least in England. These attempts at universal history prove that it is not, though it has assumed a rather more intelligent form. They presuppose, the UNESCO project more explicitly than the others, that there is an objective truth about the past to be discovered, and that once such truth is defined in precise terms all reasonable men will acknowledge it and unanimously accept it. This positivist view of historiography is opposed—perhaps it will always and irreconcilably be opposed—by the view that historical study, and the writing and reading of history, are an integral part of a community's culture: and that just as nobody laments if a nation's painting or music or literature is distinctively different from those of every other nation, so nobody should be surprised or find it other than delightful that one nation's historiography differs from another's.

The methods, concepts, and styles of exploring and explaining the past are necessarily rooted in the whole pattern of a community's culture. So far as national community is the most intense and self-conscious in the modern world, on both sides of the European division, history must indeed "stay nationalist." So far as wider communities are also real—in the sense that there is a level of culture common to the English-speaking world, or the "Latin nations" of whom President de Gaulle likes to speak, or to "Western civilisation" as a whole when compared with Indian or Chinese cultures—then historiography, too, can become rooted in these wider cultural patterns, and so can expect to reach some consensus of opinion about the past. But try to press synthesis beyond this level, and in the manner of 18th-century rationalism or 19th-century positivism attempt a universal synthesis, comprising European and Asiatic, liberal and communist, Christian and Islamic, understanding of the past, and it soon becomes apparent that the Muse of History has outreached her grasp. Clio can reach only the fruit of the tree of knowledge, not the golden apples of the Hesperides, still less the world's apples of discord.

[6] There is a further strange surrender to the impediments of language. The bibliography is limited, almost entirely, to books written or translated in English; and "the French edition will have a principally French bibliography." Given the famous propensity of French scholars to ignore books written on their subject in English, this decision seems regrettable.

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THIS CONCLUSION is, of course, no argument at all against efforts to eliminate, from the teaching of history in schools and universities, the distorting and ludicrous versions of history exposed in such a work as Ray Allen Billington's delicious examination of *The Historian's Contribution to Anglo-American Misunderstanding* (London, 1966). Every country still suffers from the persistence of chauvinistic mythology in its text-books. Still less is it an argument against systematic teaching in schools of "World history," as discussed intelligently in the recent booklet *Towards World History*.[7] The conclusion there reached is that instead of either sticking on additional courses to those already provided in British history, or replacing these by new courses focused *only* on world history, "what is suggested is a new relationship between British history and that of the world as a whole." The problem remains to *define* this new relationship.

Nor is it an argument against scholarly attempts to transcend nationalistic separatism by systematic research into the archives of a nation other than the historian's own: though then he would be wise to be yet more humble, and suggest neglected approaches to the truth or fresh aspects of it, rather than imply that he may know better than scholars who are themselves rooted in its whole cultural heritage.

The writers who have run beyond these limits, who offer sweeps of universal history and new interpretations of it, have not, as a rule, been notably humble men: Bishop Bossuet, H. G. Wells, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee or the pundits of UNESCO. For this reason, however vast their erudition or ingenious their minds, they have invariably produced the very opposite of what they set out to do. Instead of some absolute truth at the bottom of the well, they have found at best a few aspects of the vastly complex reality of man's past experience. They have written fiction or poetry or prophecy. They have not written history. The historian today who would venture beyond the firm basis of national culture to attempt a larger synthesis of the collective experiences of the peoples of Europe, or the Atlantic basin, or even the great globe itself, must first dress in sackcloth and ashes. He must stand ready to be refuted and condemned by his peers in other lands, and eager to confess not merely to vast ignorance (for all historians must confess to that), but also to lapses of historical imagination and scholarly insight which would hardly have afflicted him on his "home ground." The natural coherence which would have come to his aid within a national culture now proves a hindrance, and it cannot be replaced by any *a priori* pattern or mechanical rhythm such as those invoked by Spengler and Toynbee.

This is not to say that non-nationalist history is impossible, or that it should not be attempted. It is only a warning, based on all the evidence so far in hand, that it is the most exacting and discouraging task that any historian can undertake. Perhaps, once its extreme hazards and difficulties are more widely appreciated along with its inherent limitations, it will be done better.

[7] Issued by Britain's Department of Education and Science (H.M.S.O., 1967).

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Column

"THE mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression of the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work. From forms of development of the forces of production, these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution...." (*The Communist Manifesto*).

In human history, or rather pre-history, for men had not yet become fully-developed human beings, Marx thought there had been four stages in the development of society; the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the bourgeois, each enduring for centuries, and each culminating in a relatively short period of revolution. The reason why revolutionary periods were comparatively rare (only four in human history, and the next would be the last!) was that changes in the material forces of production took place very slowly, and men's consciousness changed in the same slow rhythm. Only when the effects of such changes had fully worked themselves out did revolution become inevitable. Except at such moments, society lived in a precarious yet enduring balance between the old and the new, which continually shifted in favour of the new, yet never so fast that a man in his lifetime could expect to die in a fundamentally different world from the one in which he was born. For most men, the slow rotation of the seasons was of greater importance than any changes brought about by human agency and they could confidently expect to live as their parents had lived before them and their children would continue to live after them.

But what happens, on this view of history, if as a result of rapid and continuous advances in scientific knowledge, the material forces of production are themselves in process of incessant and continually increasing change, which can be measured in terms not of millennia or centuries, but of decades or even less? Do men's consciousness and the institutions in which it is embodied, church and state, the universities, the legal system, change with equally bewildering rapidity? Quite evidently they do not. But in that case will there not be a continuous series of such conflicts as Marx envisaged and the world enter on a phase of permanent revolution, in which no point of equilibrium is ever reached, even for the shortest period? Is this not in fact what is happening today?

It is worth while asking such questions because they may help us to understand why today even the most stable and firmly established institutions are suddenly presented with situations which seem to show that they are built upon sand. In particular they may help us to understand how the world presents itself to the young, who have never known a society in which everything was not provisional and who take it for granted that continuous change is of the very essence of their lives.

The phenomenon of youthful revolt, and in particular of student revolt, has by now become one of the most characteristic features of the Western world (and even of some parts of the Communist), and has begun to assume new forms which established authority tends to find more and more intractable.[1] Their common quality is a hostility amounting to contempt for the existing institutions of society, and in particular for that institution with which so many of them are brought into close contact today, the university.

THE MOST SPECTACULAR recent manifestations of this attitude have occurred in Western Germany, and particularly in Berlin, following the attempted assassination of the radical student leader, Rudi Dutschke. But the student demonstrations which have taken place in Germany are only an extreme case of similar demonstrations which have taken place in almost every other Western country, particularly the United States; so much so indeed, that it has led some people to believe that behind them all there must lie a common inspiration or a common organisation.

In fact, this would not appear to be the case. The followers of Rudi Dutschke, for example, or of the other radical German student leaders, are not communists, and indeed one of their

[1] In her recent Pelican study *Risinghill: Death of a Comprehensive School*, Mrs. Leila Berg records the following about the attitude of the London school inspectorate: "One, who maintained that six of the best would cure anything, seeing a nuclear disarmament symbol chalked on a playground wall, was heard to exclaim furiously, 'I'd sooner see four-letter words than that'...."

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most striking characteristics is the degree to which they reject orthodox communist leadership. Today, orthodox and particularly Soviet communism looks as square to the young as any of the alternatives offered by the bourgeois political parties. But if they are not communists, they are, or would claim to be Marxists. Even so, they wear their Marxism with a difference, for they are largely preoccupied with the attempt to create a form of Marxism which will give a better account of present-day capitalist society, and their own position within it, than can be found in classical Marxist theory. In this respect it may be of some relevance that a disproportionately large number of them, and of their leaders, are students of sociology; for whatever one may think of modern sociology, it is certainly true that it has absorbed and assimilated a large part of the content of Marx's thought and no one who takes sociology seriously can well avoid the question how far Marxism is relevant to the modern world. But in trying to answer this question, the militant German Left looks not only to Marx but to such widely different interpreters of his thought as Rosa Luxemburg, Herbert Marcuse, Ché Guevara, Régis Debray, Mao Tse-tung, and Ho Chi Minh.

What kind of picture of our present-day society do they form under such influences? It is of a society in which, as a result of "*spätkapitalistische*" methods of production, combined with the increased powers of control conferred by advanced technology, men and women are increasingly deprived of the one essential condition and guarantee of their humanity, that is to say, their freedom, and with it their dignity and their individuality. A human being, however, does not submit to such a situation willingly, or even automatically. He has to be coerced and "manipulated" into doing so, by all the means which modern technology has placed in the hands of the ruling class and its Board of Directors, the State. They include all the means of persuasion, communication, indoctrination, education, advertisement, now available to his masters, which are ruthlessly exercised upon him every moment of his day and every day of his life; taken together, they constitute a continuous act of aggression against him as a human being. By such pressures, unrelentingly applied, society is able to convince its victims that they actually consent to—even enjoy—their abject condition, but if, in the rare cases where consent is lacking (as for instance in the case of Negroes, Jews, or Students, who are each for particular reasons not fully assimilated into society), they attempt to revolt, then society has to hand the immense apparatus of force and coercion entrusted to the state, which in the last analysis, and in the absence of any religious or ethical justification, provides society with its only final sanction. But in fact there is no difference in principle between the use of persuasion or coercion as practised in modern society; both are an affront to the freedom and autonomy of the individual human being and do violence to his deepest nature.

★

THE NOTION of "manipulation" is fundamental to the new ideology of the radical student movement in Germany. But its influence can also be traced, in less explicit forms, in manifestations of student protest elsewhere, and in particular in those in which students have found themselves in direct conflict with their own university authorities. The issues on which such conflict has arisen are innumerable; but perhaps it would be fair to say each one has been influenced by students feeling that at the university they are subjected to a form of education which is imposed upon them from above, since they have no influence on its content and no part in its administration. In this respect, university education is assimilated with other forms of "manipulation" practised by society, and protest against it is strengthened by the feeling that universities today fulfil so vital and indispensable a function in the military-industrial society of "late capitalism" that they can best be regarded simply as yet another of its agents for manipulating the student into the condition in which he will best perform the part which that society requires of him. And indeed, whether or not the student is justified in his protests—or the lengths to which he may carry them[2]—it would be impossible to acquit the universities entirely of such a charge today, given the closeness and complexity of the associations which bind them to the state.

But the idea of "manipulation" is also important because of the conclusions which can be drawn from it. If violence, open or veiled, and not consent is in fact the basis on which society rests, then violence is justified in reply; it becomes, in the eyes of the Berlin students, a form of "revolutionary self-defence." It is reported that Rudi Dutschke, before he was shot, was under attack from other student leaders for tending to advocate non-violent forms of protest. But the argument was about a question of tactics rather than of principle. For whether violent or non-violent means are employed, the aim is to tear the smiling mask from the face

[2] See Kai Hermann, "Germany's Young Left" in the April ENCOUNTER, and Theo Sommer's "The Easter Riots" in this number.

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of society and reveal the hideousness beneath. to bring the forces of "law and order" to action in the streets, rubber whips flailing, water-cannons firing, tear-gas rifles at the ready, so that they, and the society of which they are the guardians, shall be exposed for what they truly are. This can be achieved by non-violent as well as violent means. It did not require violence to invoke the massacre at Amritsar.

The underlying aim of bringing the forces of law and order to open battle has shown itself repeatedly in recent student demonstrations both in Germany and in the riots on the Berkeley, San Francisco and Columbia campuses in the United States. It is an objective which tends to reduce university authorities to a condition of baffled exasperation, for it means that the particular questions at issue are not really important. What is important is whether they can be pressed to a point at which the university authorities are compelled to employ physical force. The radical students do not want an argument; they want a battle.

In aiming at this objective, they employ very different tactics from those adopted by revolutionary movements in the past. Classical Marxist theory foresaw the overthrow of the bourgeois state by an army of proletarians who had acquired a common discipline and *esprit de corps* in the factories. But in the latest phase of capitalism, which offers to everyone a share in the affluence made possible by technological advance, the proletariat in this sense has ceased to exist. Economically, its status approximates to that of the middle class, and with prosperity it increasingly acquires middle-class values and attitudes and is subjected to the same forms of "manipulation" as the rest of society. In such a situation, the conception of a revolutionary élite as the "general staff" of a huge proletarian army loses its validity; besides, as the Soviet Union and the Communist states of Eastern Europe have shown, revolutions formed on this model contain the seeds of their own destruction and only provide the foundation for new forms of oppression.

THE YOUNG MILITANT RADICAL of today looks elsewhere for his presumably non-oppressive, non-manipulative models. He looks to Cuba, to South America, to China, to Viet Nam, to Fidel and Ho and Mao, and everywhere he seeks for lessons which he can adapt to his own situation as a member of a small and isolated group in a society which is either hostile or indifferent to his aims. He finds his model most of all in the forms of guerrilla warfare which have provided the starting point for peasant revolutions. The guerrilla, like the student, is initially an isolated individual. He is a loner. He operates in small, loosely-organised groups of individuals like himself, whose attitude towards the rest of the population, even those sections of it for whose benefit he is ultimately fighting, is necessarily, because of the danger of betrayal, one of constant mistrust and suspicion. His object, initially, is a military one; to bring to battle, on ground and under conditions of his own choosing, the armed forces on which established society rests and to show that they can be defeated, first on a small, and then on a larger scale. Only when he has demonstrated his capacity to win such victories can he hope to secure popular support, because only so can he expose both the true nature and the potential weakness of The Establishment.

The marches, the protests, the demonstrations, the riots in which students have been increasingly involved are the equivalent of the ambushes, the sudden raids on exposed positions, the jungle sorties of a guerrilla campaign, transferred to the campus and the avenues. It is significant that, at this moment, it should have reached its height in Western Germany, which, though brilliantly successful economically, is certainly the most precariously balanced of the advanced capitalist states, and the least well equipped, politically and psycho-

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logically, to meet the kind of provocation offered by the students.

It is equally significant that the campaign should now have moved off the campus into a sphere which is of far greater direct concern to the great mass of German citizens, that is to say, the sphere of the Press and of liberty of speech and expression. The point of attack, it may be thought, has been well chosen. For Axel Springer's monopolistic role in the West German Press does constitute a real threat to freedom of thought and expression; the students can reasonably claim that it is an extreme and glaring case of the "manipulation" of opinion by a vast capitalist enterprise. They can even claim, with some plausibility, that the shooting of Rudi Dutschke was a direct consequence of the influence exercised by Springer, for the violence of the vituperation and abuse poured by his newspapers on the rebellious students of Berlin, Frankfurt, Cologne and elsewhere might well have persuaded unbalanced minds that shooting is too good for them. From the students' point of view, to have compelled the police to use force to protect Axel Springer's vans is a kind of laboratory demonstration of the complicity which, they believe, exists between the forces of organised oppression in Germany.

It is too early as yet to say how far student radicalism will develop in Germany, and what success (if any) the students will have in their campaign against Springer; or what its consequences are likely to be in the neighbouring lands[3]; but it is certainly an affair whose developments should be watched by the rest of the Western world with the greatest concern and interest.

R

[3] On his return from Prague, Stephen Morrison, editor of the Edinburgh University newspaper *Student*, reported (*Spectator*, 19 April):

> A week before he was shot in Berlin, Rudi Dutschke, leading member of the West German Social Students Organisation, was being attacked rather less physically at a student's meeting in the Philosophical Faculty of the Charles University in Prague.
>
> On that occasion it was Dutschke's ideas that were the targets for the assault. Czech students dismissed his Marxist-Leninist theories as 'comic,' 'absurd' and 'worthy of rejection by a fifteen-year-old.' The system had been tried, they said, and had ended in abject failure. Any theory which managed to combine both inefficiency and slavery deserved to be abandoned.

In My Seventeenth Year

Cinnamon leaves sailed in the rain
Crows flapped in the compost heap

An old man, patiently dying in Rome,
smiled on the singing of little girls
as candles floated round his bed
like milkdrops, cold as the light of the moon

An olive tree, rooted in Thessaly, wrenched
the last male strength from its tangled boughs
in one attempt to endure

And I lay watching the seabirds
drifting in high salt-winds,
learning what summer is

Jeffrey Hamm

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Nicholas Snowden Willey

Lament

Understand, I can't cope. I cannot cope.
The doctors said my labour had no worth,
The hysterical pregnancy of hope,
No love was given me, no seed for birth,
That the great swelling that I felt inside,
The growing fingers and the acorn head,
Was but a skinful of hot air and pride,
Because the unloved one dare not hear it said
I have not been loved: and this is my shame,
The deep perplexity that has no name.

I dreamt and suddenly I woke defiled.
I dreamt I bodied forth a stillborn child
Like a jellyfish of immense old age
And an eye looked out from its cold rib cage
And in that eye such wild hope that I awoke
And the sheets were sodden, but they were cold,
And I was alone, but somebody spoke.
The trees repeat my name: who have they told?
How long ago was it that life became
The deep perplexity that has no name?

I sit and turn the wheel. I sit alone.
I call this wheel the discipline of dawn
Because it has circumference and stone,
Wears down the sharpened blade and I am worn
Because my mind is tempered on the dawn
Because I bear something that can't be born;
And when the suffusion of hope turns cold
Each day outlives its purpose and grows old
In a confusion past blessing or blame,
A deep perplexity that has no name.

World, I have kept faith with you; but the moon
Lights up the far fields of the other course
I might have taken; and I stare and soon
Sets in the silent blizzard of remorse.
Pent silence breeds violence, and out there
Despair leaves its lair and waits on the stair.
Last night I burst the door. I made my claim.
Love me, I cried, love me. Give me a name.
Very close the merciless echo came,
A deep perplexity that had no name.

Out on the moors last night I found the bones
Of memory, and they grown hard as stones.
I'm building a wall of found stones between
The curious forest, the village green.
Sometimes I have built on into the dark.
Sometimes the scrape of stones brings out a spark,
And there between stones is the wisdom I mark,
That light alone is at home in the dark.
What sets it guttering? What put the flame
In a perplexity that has no name?

The trees mark me out. I have lost my way
And the bright normality of the day
Is conversation where I have no say.
Swarms of doubts have kept the great hope at bay.
The slant of sunlight and of mind is such
That each object is cast into relief
And each insect seems troubled overmuch
By its own shadow, its own sack of grief.
How long ago was it that life became
The deep perplexity that has no name?

Muzzled by logic hope was led away
Down corridors of care; hidden from day
And long from night in bone-strewn leaf-lined den.
Now suddenly it's Spring and hope's own time
And time for hope to tread the world again
And lead me laughing past the traps of time.
I go down there. I push the leaf-lined door
And through the musty air discern him there,
My great companion: septic eyes stare
From his moth-eaten head: he reaches out
A withered hand. I guide him shambling out,
Knowing there's left one thing for me to claim,
The right to spend my days with him, and go out
Into the perplexity that has no name.

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Michel Foucault

By Maurice Cranston

IN FRANCE Michel Foucault seems to have enjoyed, or at any rate experienced, a fashionable success akin to that some years ago of the *nouveau roman*. For a philosopher—and Foucault is a professional philosopher, at present director of the Institut de Philosophie at the University of Clermont-Ferrand—such fame is unusual. There is nothing in the titles of Foucault's books to suggest a wide appeal: *Maladie mentale et personnalité,*[1] *Folie et déraison,*[2] *Naissance de la clinique,*[3] *Raymond Roussel,*[4] *Les Mots et les choses*[5]—three books about sickness and madness, one about a pre-surrealist (or aleatory) writer who killed himself, and a book about language. Henri Bergson himself, one imagines, could not have commanded the attention of *le tout Paris* if he had discoursed on such subjects; even Sartre had to make his name as a novelist before he was noticed as a philosopher. Yet here is Foucault, with his high seriousness and melancholy themes, an instantaneous hit.

His impact is perhaps not entirely unwilled. He is young, still only a little over forty, and he sees himself very much as a *nouvelle vague* or "with it" figure, a spokesman of his generation. In an interview with Madeleine Chapsal, Foucault said: "One realised very suddenly about fifteen years ago that one was very very far removed from the preceding generation, that of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty and *Les Temps Modernes*." Asked who this "one" was, he answered:

> The generation of people who were less than twenty years old during the war. We recognised Sartre's generation as undoubtedly courageous and generous, with a passion for life and politics and existence—but we, we have discovered another thing, another passion, a passion for concepts and what I shall call "system."
>
> (*La Quinzaine littéraire*, 16 May 1966)

He is a brilliant writer, in the manner of Maurice Blanchot, rhetorical, paradoxical, dialectical; but whereas Blanchot's style is rebarbative and rather German, Foucault's is mellifluous, repetitious and fast. His originality is more questionable. Foucault himself speaks of drawing on sources that the French do not know about because the French with their "monoglot narcissism" ignore foreign scholarship. He mentions Cambridge historiography, Anglo-Saxon logical theory, American criticism, German philosophy (he was at the *Institut Français* in Hamburg), and he declares himself a follower of Nietzsche. He also acknowledges his obvious debt to Blanchot.[6] Yet, running through all his work are curious echoes and reverberations, not of neglected theorists, but of those very much received today by the younger intellectuals of France, of Louis Althusser, a Marxist, who was once Foucault's teacher, of Jacques Lacan, Marcel Mauss, Roussel, Dumézil, not to mention Sartre—and above all, Foucault's work betrays the influence of that brilliant exponent of structuralism, Claude Lévi-Strauss. It is perhaps this very mixture of the familiar and unfamiliar, of the *chic* and the esoteric, which holds one

[1] *Maladie mentale et personnalité*. (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France (1954).

[2] *Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. (Plon, 1961). Trans. by Richard Howard as *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. (New York, Random House, 1965; London, Tavistock Publications, 1967).

[3] *Naissance de la clinique*. (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1963).

[4] *Raymond Roussel*. (Paris, Gallimard, 1963).

[5] *Les Mots et les choses: une archéologie des sciences humaines*. (Paris, Gallimard, 1966). A translation by Richard Howard is announced for forthcoming publication by Random House and Tavistock.

[6] Foucault is a member of the editorial board of three which runs the Paris literary periodical *Critique*, in the pages of which the influence of Maurice Blanchot is often very marked.

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clue to the popular success of Foucault's work; that, and (as one cannot help feeling) a certain sensational quality it has. Foucault names the Marquis de Sade as his favourite writer next to Nietzsche: the preference is revealing. Foucault's work has a significant place in the current cult of violence for the sake of violence. And Dr. David Cooper, the British existentialist psychiatrist, who would perhaps prefer to be called an "anti-psychiatrist," writes, in a preface to the English version of Foucault's *Folie et déraison* (*Madness and Civilisation*): "The true significance of [this] book resides most precisely in the terror that it may produce in a significant few of us."

BUT EVEN APART FROM such morbid thrills, Foucault's writings are most enjoyable, in spite of their titles. His *Folie et déraison*, which is also known by its alternative or sub-title, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, begins with an account of the decline of leprosy in modern Europe, and the closing of the lazar-houses, followed in sequence by the opening of places of confinement for the mad. A "history" the book is called, but it is far from Foucault's intention to give us an account of madness on the lines that a history of leprosy might be written, tracing its spread and development and changes down the ages. On the contrary, Foucault holds that madness is not a disease at all.

Madness, he says, is a form of knowledge which the dominant culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could not understand. Madness, he says, is fusion of reason and unreason; and he denies that reason has any objective privilege over unreason. In the Age of Reason there ceases to be any "dialogue" between the "sane" and the "insane" because unreason does not speak and reason no longer speaks to unreason.

> In the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman: on the one hand, the man of reason delegates the physician to madness, thereby authorising a relation only through the abstract universality of disease; on the other, the man of madness communicates with society only by the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the requirements of conformity. As for a common language, there is no such thing; or rather there is no such thing any longer; the constitution of madness as a mental illness, at the end of the eighteenth century, affords the evidence of a broken dialogue, posits the separation as already effected, and thrusts into oblivion all those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax, in which the exchange between madness and reason was made. The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason *about* madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence.

This "silence" is what Foucault sets out to explore. He claims that it is something characteristic of the modern world. In the Middle Ages and until the Renaissance, man's dispute with madness was a "dramatic debate in which he confronted the secret powers of the world." The medieval understanding of madness was coloured by images of the Fall and the Will of God, of the Beast and the Metamorphosis, and of all the marvellous secrets of Knowledge. Moreover, the Middle Ages gave madness a relatively minor place in the hierarchy of vices. As the opposite of prudence, it was one of the twelve dualities which disputed the sovereignty of the human soul. At the Renaissance, madness leaves that modest place and moves to the forefront. It also becomes exceedingly disturbing. Foucault quotes from various Renaissance authors who assign to madness the privilege of reigning over whatever is bad in men. In Shakespeare and Cervantes, again, madness occupies, he suggests, "an extreme place," in that it is shown to be beyond appeal; nothing ever restores it either to truth or to reason; it leads only to laceration and thence to death.

"But very soon," Foucault continues, "madness leaves these ultimate regions where Cervantes and Shakespeare had situated it, and in the literature of the early seventeenth century it occupies, by preference, a median place . . . madness is no longer considered in its tragic reality, in the absolute laceration that gives it access to the other world; but only in the irony of its illusions."

Thus there emerges that understanding of madness which is characteristic of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "*l'âge classique*" or "the Age of Reason."

> The great threat that dawned on the horizon of the fifteenth century subsides, the disturbing powers that inhabit Hieronymus Bosch's painting of the Ship of Fools have lost their violence. Forms remain, now transparent and docile, forming a cortège, the inevitable procession of reason. Madness has ceased to be—at the limits of the world, of men and death—an eschatological figure; the darkness has dispersed on which the eyes of madness were fixed and out of which the forms of the impossible were born. Oblivion falls upon the world navigated by the freed slaves of the Ship of Fools. Madness will no longer proceed from a point within the world to a point beyond, on its strange voyage; it will never again be that fugitive and absolute limit. Behold it moored now, made fast among things and men. Retained and maintained. No longer a ship but a hospital.

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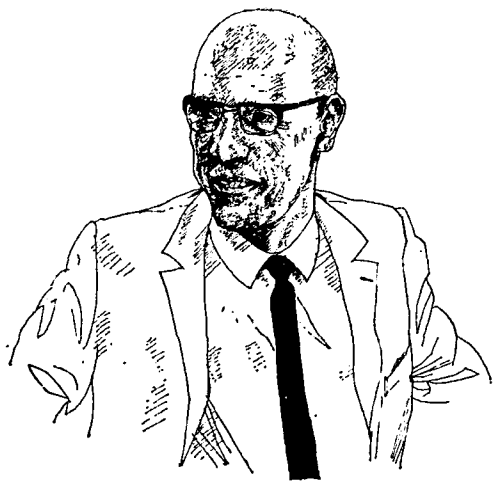
THE CURIOUS THING was that in spite of having tamed the violence of the voices of Renaissance madness, the Age of Reason did not wish to hear them at all. The "hospital" that Foucault speaks of was essentially a place of confinement. Foucault detects an analogy between the medieval attitude to lepers and the Age of Reason's attitude to madmen. When the Middle Ages banished lepers from society, such men were thought of as having been delivered up to God. To abandon a leper was not, to the medieval mind, an act of disservice; to exclude him from the company of ordinary people, to shut him up in lazar-houses, was to speed him on the way to salvation. When leprosy disappeared from Europe, the same formula of exclusion remained—but it fastened on to a new object, and the men who were thenceforth to be redeemed by confinement included, notably, the mad.

It is common knowledge that the seventeenth century created great houses of confinement, especially in France. Foucault claims (but does not document the claim) that as many as one out of every hundred inhabitants of Paris were locked up, madmen together with criminals, pederasts and vagabonds.[7] The most famous "hospital" was the *Hôpital Général*, an institution which had nothing to do with medicine, but a great deal to do with the absolutist politics of the Bourbon kings: soon after its foundation in 1656 there were as many as 6,000 people within its walls. The *Hôpital Général* was primarily intended to suppress begging: a "modern" solution to an ancient problem. Later it was modernised still more effectively when work was given to the unfortunates who were put inside, and people who had once been a drain on charity were made to contribute to the prosperity of all.



FOUCAULT

Foucault offers three forms or layers of explanation for this phenomenon. The first is more or less sociological; that is, he suggests that the attitude of the Age of Reason towards madness was governed by dread. "Until the seventeenth century," he writes, "evil in all its most violent and inhuman forms could not be punished unless it was brought into the open." But the Age of Reason preferred to hide things away, fearing that some aspects of evil had such a power of contagion and contamination that publicity must necessarily multiply them. Only oblivion could suppress them. The "hospital" was a place where the evil of madness could be concealed, isolated, and forgotten.

BUT FOUCAULT is not satisfied with this explanation, and passes to a more philosophical or existentialist one: "Ultimately," he writes, "confinement did not seek to suppress madness... the essence of confinement was not the exorcism of a danger. Confinement merely disclosed what madness, in its essence, was; a manifestation of non-being; and by providing this manifestation, confinement thereby suppressed it, since it restored it to its truth as nothingness. Confinement is the practice which corresponds most exactly to madness experienced as unreason, that is, as the empty negativity of reason; by confinement, madness is acknowledged to be *nothing*."

Besides this sociological and this metaphysical explanation, Foucault also adumbrates, if he does not fully state, an economic one: the mad are bundled together with vagabonds and criminals because they are all members of the same economic class, now felt to be a burden and embarrassment to the rising capitalist order. In an article about Foucault in *Critique* (May 1965), François Dagonet sums up the argument of this section of the *Folie et déraison* with these words: "On the one hand, the empty lazar-houses invited, awaited new guests. And the bourgeois did not fail to install in the *Hôpital Général* eccentrics, delinquents, nymphomaniacs, homosexuals, blasphemers, infidels, the idle—all those who compromised the good ordering of social space." The expression "bourgeois order," with its Marxist implications, is Dagonet's, not Foucault's: but it is a perfectly valid reading of what Foucault is saying. Indeed it is arguable that the Marxist notion of "infra-structure" plays a crucial role in his theory.

[7] Foucault offers no evidence to support the suggestion that pederasts formed a prominent section of the class of persons thus confined. But clearly homosexuality for him, as for Gide, is an exciting subject, not least because it may be punished.

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HOWEVER THIS MAY BE, Foucault passes from considering the attitude to madness which belonged to the Age of Reason to consider that which belonged to the nineteenth century. For this, on his view, was another distinct epoch. It was the age of psychology, the age in which the different forms of insanity and mental disturbance were assigned "scientific" names. Foucault argues that the chief significance of these innovations was to give madness a new content of guilt, of moral sanction and just punishment which was no part of the experience of the Age of Reason. Nineteenth-century psychiatry reduced madness to the status of a mere disease. "Madness," as Foucault puts it, "was now detached from its truth, which was unreason," and was henceforth "nothing but a phenomenon adrift and insignificant upon the undefined surface of nature."

Foucault's appraisal of nineteenth-century medicine as a method of introjecting guilt into disease may remind some readers of Dr. Alex Comfort's book, *The Anxiety Makers* (1967); Foucault's view of asylums as places of punishment has clear affinities with the argument of Dr. R. D. Laing and his "Dialectics of Revolution" group, who regard conventional psychiatry as being itself a form of violence, a method of beating a nonconforming individual into submission to established social norms. And Foucault himself returns to the attack in a further work, *Naissance de la clinique* (1963), in which he moves from the field of madness to that of sickness in general, and describes the nineteenth-century hospital, the so-called place of healing, as yet another place of confinement. But the main object of criticism in this short, but richly polemical essay is the positivistic assumptions on which the claims of nineteenth-century medicine to be a science rested. Anatomy and pathology—the cutting up of dead bodies as a means of discovering the secrets of the living—inspire some of Foucault's most vigorous scorn:

> The sovereignty of the visible. And even more imperious than that, the power of death. That which hides, and spreads the curtain of night over Truth is, paradoxically, life. Death, on the contrary, opens to the light of day the dark box of the human body: life is dark, death is clear: the oldest conceptual values of the western world meet in here in a strange inversion, which is the very direction of pathological anatomy.... The medicine of the nineteenth century was haunted by that occult eye which cadaverises life.

The nineteenth century, the age of positivism, is clearly the period that Foucault most dislikes. But at the end of it comes Nietzsche—and also Freud, to whom Foucault pays a fervent tribute:

> Between Freud's *Five Case Histories* and Janet's scrupulous investigations of *Psychological Healing*, there is more than the density of a *discovery*; there is the sovereign violence of a *return*. Janet enumerated the elements of a division, drew up his inventory, annexed here and there, perhaps conquered. Freud went back to madness at the level of its *language*, reconstituted one of the essential elements of an experience reduced to silence by positivism; he did not make a major addition to the list of psychological treatments for madness; he restored, in medical thought, the possibility of a dialogue with unreason. Let us not be surprised that the most "psychological" of medications has so quickly encountered its converse and its organic confirmations. It is not psychology that is involved in psycho-analysis, but precisely an experience of unreason that it has been psychology's meaning, in the modern world, to mask.

SOME GUIDE to an understanding of Foucault's writings on madness may be found in his later writings on language, especially *Les Mots et les choses*, which is perhaps his most ambitious work to date. The continuity between the two is insisted upon by the author. In the preface to the later book he explains that whereas *Folie et déraison* was a history of the OTHER, *Les Mots et les choses* is a history of the SAME. This somewhat obscure remark was itself explained by Foucault in an interview[8]—"*Folie et déraison* was, broadly speaking, the history of separation, the history above all of a certain division which every society finds itself obliged to institute. In *Les Mots et les choses*, on the other hand, I wanted to write the history of order, that is of the way in which a society reflects the resemblances of things among themselves and the way in which the differences between things can be mastered, organised in networks, arranged according to rational schemes. *Folie et déraison* is the history of difference; *Les Mots et les choses* the history of resemblance, of the same, of identity."

As in the earlier book, Foucault depicts the past as being divided into very distinct periods. Indeed it is the main argument of *Les Mots et les choses* that there are two great splits or discontinuities to be observed in the *episteme* of western culture: the first, which inaugurates the Age of Reason in the first half of the seventeenth century, and the second at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which marks the threshold of modernity.

The key to the *episteme* or the *savoir* which is central to a culture, is, Foucault says, language. In Europe before the Age of Reason, he suggests, language existed in its simple and primitive condition. Language in the sixteenth century was part of the world: things were then

[8] With Raymond Bellour, in *Les Lettres françaises*, 21 March 1966.

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understood as both revealing and hiding their enigma as language. Words were regarded as a special sort of thing: things to decipher. Between words and things there was thus a kind of unity: and the link between the sign and what was signified was *resemblance*. Foucault adds:

> Up to the end of the sixteenth century resemblance helped to construct the knowledge that belonged to western culture. It was resemblance which, to a large extent, shaped the exegesis and the interpretation of texts, resemblance which organised the use of symbols, which permitted acquaintance with visible and invisible things, and guided the art of representing them. The world revolved around itself; the earth repeated the sky; faces were reflected in the stars; and plants contained within their stems secrets for the service of man. Painting imitated space. Representation, whether in art or in learning, took the form of repetition: being a theatre of life or a mirror of the world, such was what gave all language its validity, its mode of proclaiming itself and of formulating its right to speak.

Foucault distinguishes four types of similitude. First, there is *convenientia*, or the resemblance of proximity and harmony, such as that of the body and the soul, or "the great chain of being." It is a similitude which pertains less to individual things than to the whole in which they find themselves: the world is the home of a universal *convenientia*. Secondly, Foucault distinguishes *aemulatio*. Here the similitude is between things not proximate, but separated by space, as in the example of a face and its image in a glass: the "great chain of being" is here no longer joined, though its divided links still confront each other across a gap; there is such a similitude between Man and God, between the light of the eyes and the light of the sun. Thirdly, there is *analogy*, a familiar notion in both Greek and medieval philosophy, where the resemblance is not visible but only conceivable. And fourthly, there is the type of resemblance which rests, as Foucault puts it, on the play of *sympathy* and *antipathy*. "Sympathy," he writes, "is an instance of the *Same* so powerful and so imperious that it is not content to be one of the forms of similitude; it has a dangerous power of assimilation, of rendering things identical with one another, of uniting them, of making them disappear as individual entities." So sympathy has to be compensated by its twin, antipathy, which preserves things in their separateness and prevents assimilation: "The identity of things, the fact that things can resemble and approach each other without fusing together but while still preserving their individuality, is the result of constant balancing of sympathy and of antipathy which replies to it."

Foucault goes on to suggest that the ruinous weakness of this type of *episteme*, and of the concept of similitude on which it rested, is that it was imprisoned within itself: the sixteenth century mind was "condemned to knowing only the same thing." Knowledge was confined to things that are capable of resembling each other. And it is because of this conceptual defect, according to Foucault, that the *episteme* of the sixteenth century gave way to another, and (as he believes) radically different one, that of the Age of Reason. The philosophers of the Age of Reason were all against the theory of similitudes: Bacon the empiricist no less than Descartes the rationalist. In that new age representation was to take the place of resemblance.

Foucault sees Cervantes' Don Quixote as a key figure at this crucial moment of European thought. All the travels and adventures of Cervantes' hero can be seen, he suggests, as a "quest for similitudes": and the important thing is that Don Quixote is disappointed.

"*Don Quixote* negates the world of the Renaissance; the written word ceases to be the prose of the real world; resemblances and signs are no longer united; similitudes are deceptive, they lead to visions and frenzies; things cling obstinately to their ironical identity; things are no longer anything but what they are; words wander at random, without content, without resemblances to give them substance; they no longer denominate things, but sleep between the leaves of dusty books." Signs, which were once regarded as keys to knowledge, are understood in the Age of Reason as being co-existensive with representations. As signs, all representations became part of an immense ordered network. For the Age of Reason does not merely introduce new thoughts, it reconstitutes the whole system of thought. And the limit of knowledge becomes the perfect transparency of representations in the signs which order them.

The significance of Descartes for Foucault is not that Descartes was the founder of "rationalism," but that he introduced analysis in place of analogy as the method of enlarging knowledge. "Henceforth all resemblance would be submitted to the text of comparison; that is to say, it was not accepted unless it was certified by measurement, by common unity, or, more radically, by the order, the identity and the series of differences." Cartesian truth was to be formed in clear and distinct ideas. The Leibnizian project of establishing a mathematics of qualitative order was central to the thought of the Age of Reason. Not that its thinkers concentrated on mathematics as such: but rather that the whole *episteme* or *savoir* of the age was based on a

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mathematical concept of order. Hence its characteristic *taxinomia*: the arrangement of all identities and differences in categories. "General grammars" are devised to guarantee the complete intelligibility of words; "natural histories" are constructed to classify things and animals in rigid lines; theories of exchange are invented to explain the circulation of wealth. Language itself becomes the analysis of thought, not in the simple sense of a "cutting up," but analysis understood as "the profound inauguration of order in space." This, in turn, leads to the union of speech and understanding—to know is to speak correctly. Vocabulary becomes a "bible of knowledge." To speak, to clarify, to know—all these are strictly "of *the same order*." The basic task of discourse is to assign a name to a thing, and with this name to name its being.

Thus, Foucault continues, for two centuries of modern culture, discourse took the place of ontology. When it named the being of representation in general it was philosophy—the theory of knowledge and analysis of ideas; when it assigned to each represented thing the name which fitted it, it was science—nomenclature and *taxinomia*. This is Foucault's explanation of the coherence which exists throughout the Age of Reason between the theory of representation and the theories of language, of natural history and of wealth.

AT THE BEGINNING of the nineteenth century this configuration changed entirely. The theory of representation was discredited: and thus could no longer serve as a general basis for all possible order; and the notion of language as a spontaneous picture of things and as the necessary medium between representations and beings, vanished in its turn. Natural history gave way to biology: theories of wealth to political economy.

What had happened? The modern mind had become conscious of the limits of representation: and representation as an *idée clef* was jettisoned even as similitude had been two centuries earlier.

> At the beginning of the 19th century, words recovered their old, their enigmatic density. But this was not to restore them to the map of the world they had inhabited at the Renaissance, nor to bundle them together with things in a reciprocal systems of signs. Detached from representation, language existed thereafter—and has continued to exist until our own time—only as a scattered mode; for philologists, words are like so many objects thrown up and left behind by history; for those who seek to formalise, language has shed its concrete content, and reveals only abstract forms of discourse.

Once again the figure of Nietzsche appears towards the end of the story as an angel of intellectual deliverance. For at the end of the nineteenth century, language makes its "return to the field of thought," because Nietzsche then makes "a radical reflection on language" the task of philosophy.[9] Language is restored, reborn. And Foucault's love of paradox finds satisfaction in a further irony: the rebirth of language, under Nietzsche's auspices, coincides with the death not only of God, but of Man. "Man," Foucault is able to say on the last page of *Les Mots et les choses*, "is an invention of recent date; and perhaps of an imminent end."

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS in appraising Michel Foucault's books is to decide what *kind* of books they are. So far I have spoken of them as "histories," and this is a word that Foucault himself often uses. Indeed in certain respects, they might seem to belong to that field of enquiry which has become very lively in recent years, intellectual history or the "history of ideas." But Foucault does not much care for this category. Books on the history of ideas, he protests (justly with regard to many of them), are chronological accounts of theories, philosophies, movements of opinion: whereas he himself is not interested in theories or *Weltanschauungen*. What interests him, he says, is the logic of the concepts out of which the *episteme* of an epoch is constructed.

As a name for this enterprise, he prefers not "history" but "archaeology." He explained his use of this term in his interview with Raymond Bellour:

> By "archaeology" I wish to name not a discipline exactly, but a field of research, which could be described as follows: In any society, the knowledge, the philosophical ideas, the ordinary day-to-day beliefs, and, moreover, the institutions, the commercial and political practices, the social customs—all these lead us back to a certain implicit *episteme* which belongs to that society. This *episteme* is profoundly different from the knowledge found in the scientific books, the philosophical theories, the religious apologetics, but it is what makes possible the appearance, at a given moment, of theories, beliefs, practices.

Foucault seeks this *episteme* in the widest possible study of the literature, the documents, the institutions, the whole "archive," as he calls it, of the period. His "archaeology" is, in his own words, "the science of that archive."

[9] Foucault thus makes for Nietzsche a claim which is often made for Wittgenstein; see, for example, Justus Hartnack's *Wittgenstein and Modern Philosophy* (Methuen, London; and Doubleday, New York, 1965).

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I do not myself feel that this novel employment of the word "archaeology" is to be welcomed. "Archaeology" has already a generally understood use in English as "the systematic study of the remote past"; and the word *archéologie* in French has the same meaning: *"Étude des civilisations anciennes grâce aux monuments figurés et aux objets qu'il en restent,"* as it is expressed in the *Grand Larousse Encyclopédique*, Vol. I (1960).

To stipulate a new definition for a word which has already a fairly unequivocal meaning in ordinary use is to spread confusion, and not light.[10] This is perhaps a greater fault in Foucault since he seems to believe that the ambiguity of words can prove highly destructive. At any rate, he suggests in his study of the pre-surrealist poet, *Raymond Roussel*, that there was a direct connection between Roussel's passion for exploring and exploiting the different and conflicting meanings which the same word can bear and Roussel's ultimate suicide.[11]

To TREAT FOUCAULT as a historian may, in view of his claim to be something else, be unfair. However, it must be said that as a writer of what is, at least, about the past, he has a marked and oddly old-fashioned weakness: that of detecting radical "splits" or *coupures* in man's past experience which do not, on a closer scrutiny, appear to be at all clear-cut, if they are there at all. The past can, of course, be said to fall into periods which sometimes (but rarely) correspond to the arbitrary division of time into centuries. But the strict periodisation is more an invention of textbooks than a feature of history itself.

Nor are Foucault's boldest statements about the past backed up with any evidence. His method is too often that of argument by assertion. For example, Foucault writes: "No life in the Age of Reason, and no science of life, and no philology either. But 'natural history' and 'general grammars.' Equally no political economy. Instead there existed in the 17th and 18th centuries a notion . . . or rather a domain: this domain, the field and object of 'economy' in the Age of Reason, is that of *wealth*." None of this is supported by the work of specialists in the subjects Foucault names. William Letwin, in his *Origins of Scientific Economics* (1963), shows that political economy was not a new thing in the nineteenth, or even in the eighteenth century; the studies of Daniel Mornet, Réné Hubert, Ernst Cassirer, and others, place the "general grammars" of the Enlightenment within a long tradition; and the continuity between what was actually done under the name of "natural history" in the eighteenth century and what was actually done under the name of "natural science" in later generations is attested by all the recognised histories of science, which are, of course, different from histories of the theories of science. The "splits" or *coupures* take place in the realm of the "isms," the realm of ideologies and speculation, and even there the element of novelty or innovation is limited: for example, Destutt de Tracy, the first of the *Idéologues*, saw himself only as the successor of Condillac and as his propagandist in a more democratic age.

FOUCAULT RESTS MUCH of his argument on the claim that "representation" played a central role in the *episteme* of the Age of Reason; and no one can deny its importance. And yet this whole notion of representation was vigorously attacked during this same period, at different levels, by several eighteenth century theorists—Rousseau, for example, and Burke and Blake. And what about Kant?

Now Kant has rather a special significance with regard to Foucault's enterprise. For it is instructive to compare what Foucault is attempting with what Kant was doing when he inaugurated what he called his "Copernican revolution." Kant conceived of himself as having reversed the long-standing assumption of

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[10] See on this subject R. Robinson, *Definition* (Oxford, 1950), p. 80.

[11] This is perhaps to over-simplify Foucault's analysis of Roussel. However, I am fortified in my reading of it by Rayner Heppenstall's excellent and authoritative essay on *Roussel* (London, Calder and Boyars, 1966).

Heppenstall speaks of the "abysses" in "any picture of reality revealed by the fact that similar words may signify dissimilar things, that indeed identical words may signify things between which there is no element of identity whatever." Heppenstall continues:

"According to M. Foucault, Roussel's adventuring among those abysses led inevitably to his suicide. That Roussel's death took place on the actual threshold of a locked door has too much dazzled M. Foucault with its metaphorical and symbolic possibilities. M. Foucault is too fond of labyrinths, keys and thresholds, too anxious to find in Roussel's moment of death a culmination of the pattern of his work, seen too exclusively in terms of the tendency first to mystify, then to explain. . . . Nevertheless I do not find M. Foucault's argument wholly foolish. The human world is very largely made up of words and their resonances. Most ways of life are framed within a few accepted *clichés*, and to discover that they are meaningless is as quick a road to despair as any. Roussel's lifelong preoccupation with words that may be taken in two or more senses, or which, sounding alike, point in opposed directions, can hardly have failed to suggest to him that all words are treacherous and so that there *are* abysses in any picture of reality."

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European philosophy that our knowledge to be true must correspond to the properties of the external world; and to have put forward instead the view that the external world must conform to our knowledge. We can make no statement about what the universe really is, Kant claimed; all we can say is that if it is to be an object of understanding, it must satisfy certain conditions that the mind lays down. The mind imposes its own categories and concepts on the universe so as to make sense of experience. *The Critique of Pure Reason* could almost be regarded as an explanation of the conditions of sanity: if we did not have our notions of substance, cause, space, time, to make the world intelligible, we should be mad.

Foucault might well be thought to have taken this exceedingly general and abstract argument of Kant's and then to have given it a local and diminished reformulation: whereas Kant speaks of the human mind in terms of the permanent problem of knowledge, Foucault speaks of "the mind of Europe" in terms of its changing patterns of belief. In his earlier writings on madness, Foucault dwells on the manner in which the mind of Europe in the Age of Reason prized its sanity, and in doing so he puts that sanity into question. In his later writings on language, he moves on to further challenge. Here it is not so much a case of knowledge imposing its own concepts on the world to make the world intelligible but of different "periods" conceiving the world in different ways.

THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER, I believe, is that Foucault is doing something wholly different from Kant. What he is writing is not philosophy, any more than it is history or archaeology; it is a type of "philosophical anthropology" inspired by the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Foucault's "structuralism" is structuralism *à la* Lévi-Strauss; that is to say, it is an attempt to understand cultures, or societies, by unveiling the structures of conceptual thought which inform their understanding of the world and their behaviour.[12]

Lévi-Strauss' method is too complex to admit of a brisk epitome, but its importance for Foucault can be seen in one or two of its central features. Lévi-Strauss argues that the objective world, the raw natural environment in which man finds himself, is deeply bewildering, but that man, being a thinking creature, is also a constructing creature, albeit a rather amateurish one, like a handyman or jack-of-all-trades in his untidy shed, and he makes order out of the chaos that surrounds him with the aid of any tool that comes to hand. Members of any given society, having a certain shared experience, and enjoying relationships of exchange, including language, construct their own world in a distinctive way. The world man knows is thus not an empirical entity, containing things which he passively perceives; it is a collective representation, governed by man's natural and logical demand, as a thinking being, for some kind of order. This is why Lévi-Strauss, even in his role as an anthropologist, is primarily concerned with the structure of thought itself. He tries in his work to show how each society or culture has a particular system of categories or cognitive scheme which determines the way the people born into that culture apprehend the universe. But while Lévi-Strauss denies that such a system of categories can be deduced from the first principles (which is what he seems to regard as Kant's position), and insists that we have to study various actual societies (and thus be anthropologists) to see how different peoples conceptualise their environment, he also maintains that the degree of variety as between one conceptual scheme and another is limited; and just as Roman Jakobson, the structural philolo-

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[12] In a recent wireless (*France-Inter*) interview, published in *La Quinzaine littéraire* (1–15 March 1968), Foucault objected to the use of the name "structuralist" in a manner which implied that people with quite different interests constituted a coherent group. This was part of Foucault's "reply to Sartre"; but not the better part. Sartre had said, among other things, that the structuralists were a kind of last bastion of the bourgeoisie against Marx; and Foucault, in his reply, recalled that when he, fifteen years before, had been for a few weeks a member of the French Communist Party, Sartre himself was described in the Party as the "last bastion of bourgeois imperialism." Foucault added: "I note with amused astonishment that same phrase coming from Sartre's own pen."

A fair rejoinder. Nevertheless Sartre was surely justified in regarding the structuralists as having enough in common to be grouped together. The "category mistake" which does figure in recent French controversies is the one entailed by comparing Structuralism and Existentialism as if they were "isms" of the same sort. Sartre's existentialism, as Foucault himself rightly says, is a totalising philosophy, a comprehensive metaphysical system in the grand tradition of Hegel, whereas the concern of structuralism, or rather of those who are called structuralists, is "much less ambitious, much more limited, much more localised."

It would be interesting to quote at length from the same interview, but unfortunately Foucault has now repudiated the published version, protesting in a letter to the Editors of *La Quinzaine littéraire* (15–31 March 1968) that the text had appeared without his consent and that "cuts, rearrangements and re-editing have produced a meaning which is foreign to mine. . . ."

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gist with whom he once collaborated, argues that all languages are constructed out of a limited number of linguistic essentials or universal characteristics, Lévi-Strauss argues that all cognitive systems must have certain common features. The demand for order is universal; it is a feature of thinking mind as such; every group will construct its own system, but all those systems will bear a distinct family relationship.

These considerations led Lévi-Strauss in *La Pensée sauvage* (1962) to stress the high level of abstract reasoning underlying the cognitive systems of even the most primitive tribes. And if the name "structuralist" is anything more than a mere label or ticket, it must surely, in Lévi-Strauss' case, relate to the primary importance he gives to the construction, at the highest level of thought, of such conceptual schemes.

Foucault can, I think, be best understood as attempting to explain the cultural history of Europe in the light of this theory which he has derived from Lévi-Strauss. He takes Europe as being a temporal sequence, so to speak, of different cultures (admittedly having some essential features in common, as all cultures have); and then, in asking what is the *episteme* of this or that "period," Foucault is asking, as Lévi-Strauss might ask, what is the conceptual scheme by which that "period" gives order and coherence to experience. Unfortunately, Foucault's adaptation of this structuralist method is open to more than one objection. The first, as we have seen, is that the so-called "periods" of European history, the Renaissance, the Age of Reason, the Nineteenth Century and the rest, do *not* constitute distinctive entities, analogous to the tribes and cultures which anthropologists examine. Secondly, Foucault offers nothing which corresponds to an anthropologist's study in depth of a given society; instead of "field work," he singles out richly impressionistic highlights, such as a Cervantes novel, or a Velasquez painting, or the *Hôpital Général*, which are at best significant clues or keys.

The second characteristic of Foucault's method, which is equally a characteristic of Lévi-Strauss', is his attachment to the binary principle. This is something as old as Heraclitus and Proclus, though it is undoubtedly thanks to Hegel that it is so much the vogue in France today. It embodies the belief that life is composed of opposites in tension which men attempt to resolve symbolically when they cannot resolve them actually. The binary principle is also a central notion of Jakobson's type of structural linguistics; the notion that opposites —true and false, good and evil, positive and negative—must constitute the framework of any system of logical order. In applying this "dialectical" way of thinking to anthropology, Lévi-Strauss detects a tendency of any structure, considered historically (or, as he might prefer to say, diachronically), to produce an inverted image of itself. The young rebel against the old, fashions turn upside down, successive generations repudiate, as well as perpetuate, what they inherit.

This binary principle is something which Foucault employs with great gusto and brilliance in depicting the relationship between the different "periods" he analyses. Having first chopped them up, and proclaimed so to speak, their independence one of another, he then puts them together "dialectically" with the aid of the binary principle. The Renaissance is rendered intelligible as an inversion of the Middle Ages; the Age of Reason is seen as a mirror image of the Renaissance, and so forth.

The trouble with Foucault here is not that the technique itself is unacceptable. Employed on a modest scale to deal with a certain range of problems, as it is used by Jakobson at any rate, it can be exceedingly enlightening. But the binary principle does not lend itself to the service to which Foucault seeks to put it. Something employed to explain everything, ends up by explaining nothing; and what happened to the dialectic in the heavy hands of Karl Marx happens to it again in the delicate fingers of Michel Foucault.

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FILM

A Pad in Paddington

By John Weightman

THE FILM which has been chosen to inaugurate the cinema in the new premises of the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Nash House is yet another—and immense—variation on the theme of the alienated individual. In the hand-outs concerning Don Levy's *Herostratus* there is no mention of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Erostrate*, but the resemblance between the film and the short story can hardly be accidental.

Sartre's hero, who was created some thirty years ago, is a Parisian so disgusted with the absurdity of life that he determines to go down into the street with a loaded revolver, fire five shots into the crowd as a flamboyant gesture, and kill himself with the sixth. In the event, he cannot commit suicide and we leave him cowering in a lavatory with the public clamouring outside. Mr. Levy's hero, who is now four years old but has had to wait that time to get a showing in England, is a young Beatnik living in a picturesquely filthy room in the Harrow Road, who decides to have his suicide handled by a publicity firm but, in the event, cannot bring himself to jump, as arranged, from an office block next to St. Paul's. A stranger who happens to be taking photographs on the roof at the same time tries to pull him back from the edge, and such are life's little ironies that it is the stranger who falls to his death, while our hero is left distraught and uncatharsised, running wildly once again through the asphalt jungle.

Now I cannot help thinking that this is a monumentally bad film—overblown, muddled, and incoherently imitative—but it is worth discussing because, clearly, a lot of loving effort has been put into the making of it, and if it is the sort of thing the I.C.A. approves of, it has a symptomatic value which is more important than the film itself. It seems to me to prove that the time has perhaps come to declare a closed season for the absurdist hero, who is by now almost as big a bore as the romantic hero ever was. The Absurd is part of the modern consciousness: agreed. But the obvious points about it have been made so many hundreds of times that one has difficulty in sitting patiently in one's seat as the absurdist hero rants and raves once more and the camera moves slowly—oh God, how slowly—over the mute surface of the world.

THE CO-PRODUCER, Mr. James Quinn, who presented the film on its preliminary showing at the National Film Theatre, invited the audience to look upon it as "an Abstract," "an Event," which should be received outside the categories of traditional cinema. This statement is itself a new commonplace, if we can apply the term "new" to something which goes as far back as the early Surrealists. A more immediate predecessor is, of course, Robbe-Grillet, with his enigmatic sequences of recurring images. But Robbe-Grillet creates (or claims to create) obsessive phantasms which have no relationship to the everyday world of politics and money-earning: reality is never allowed to break into their dream-like structures. Mr. Don Levy's hero, on the other hand, is at odds with the real world. We see him eating his heart out in his pad in Paddington. We hear him confiding to the golden-hearted Negro prostitute from the floor above that he is short of cash. From time to time, he takes part in other real-life conversations (improvised, according to the hand-outs, and sometimes remarkably feeble). We gather, from the slogans on the walls and the newsreel extracts that are interpolated into the film, that the state of the modern world has a lot to do with his misery; he says at length that he wants to die because he cannot stand "all this crap." It follows that he is in a story, not in a phantasm and, this being so, it is difficult to understand why the story-line should be broken up by so many apparently irrelevant images.

For instance, there is a fateful-looking lady in black leather and carrying a black umbrella who keeps walking towards us along the same glass-and-concrete modern street. When she had occurred about a dozen times, it struck me that she must be Death, like Maria Casarès in Cocteau's *Orphée*. She does not seem to be in the hero's mind. She must therefore be a comment by the director in the form of a semi-quotation. But what is the psychological or aesthetic point of repeating such a quotation *ad libitum*? Similarly, why keep flashing back to earlier glimpses of the story—a doll dangling from the ceiling of the pad or the hero running along by the canal—if they have no cumulative bearing on the episode that has been reached? Again, why the cross-cutting between a strip-tease act and the arms of a slaughter-house worker dripping with blood? We can hardly be meant to think that strip-tease is a revolting manifestation of the sensuality of the modern world, because the camera lingers lovingly on naked flesh all through the film. The hero has his shirt off more often that he has it on and, after two hours twenty minutes, one feels intimately acquainted with every pimple on his cherished body. Nor can we be meant to think

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that slaughter-houses should be abolished, because the hero, in his one moment of boyish enthusiasm *post coitum*, says how much he likes sausages. No, these are just dramatic images which are added more or less indiscriminately to the visual broth. And for good measure, every now and again the photography is distorted so that the characters have the twisted shapes and prettiness in horror of paintings by Francis Bacon.

IN SPITE of all the experimental films I have seen and experimental novels I have read, I am still of the opinion that if one begins telling a story, it should be told convincingly either on the imaginative or the realistic level. The author can be as oblique and allusive as he likes, provided that what he presents hangs together according to the mode he has chosen. But this film doesn't make sense. We are expected to believe that the publicity men—the bloated, efficient, empty profiteers of the modern world—turn the hero's projected suicide into a campaign. This seems utterly improbable, because there is never any indication of what they might get out of it. Then, on the eve of the suicide, they send their glamour girl along to sleep with him, so that he is "softened up" for the morrow. He, poor naïve soul, thinks he has been reconciled to life by the love of a good woman, and the girl herself is so touched by his "authenticity" that she has a genuine and noisy orgasm (head thrown back, threads of saliva, *cf.* Jeanne Moreau in *Les Amants*) and is afterwards furious with her boss. When our hero learns that she has received eighty guineas for her services, he bellows like an animal in pain and describes beautiful, balletic patterns on the floor. Yet if he had a grain of the intelligence he is credited with, he would know that good women do not arrive opportunely at nightfall, swathed in gold lamé, and proceed to run their exquisitely manicured fingers over naked male shoulder-blades. He would know that she has turned up because any modern film, without showing the sex act in its entirety, has to have at least one scene, like the opening sequence of *Hiroshima*, in which a whirl of anonymous arms and legs indicates that copulation is boldly in progress. It will be a great relief to us all when, in a few years' time, film-makers are able to photograph sex from start to finish, as they can already photograph childbirth, so that the public can complete its voyeuristic experience in absolute clarity.

Another principle, too, is involved in this kind of film. All absurdist heroes are in a state of "revolt," which is a very understandable phase that practically all young people now get into and that some never emerge from. Since no one has yet found a method of transcending the Absurd except by an act of faith, the absurdist heroes have every right, intellectually, to go on being as negative and suicidal as they wish, however tedious and repetitive we may find them. The trouble is that so many of them rail against society when, in fact, they are really annoyed with God. It is not at all clear how far the hero of *Herostratus*, or the film as a whole, is critical of society as such, in the name of an ideal that might be achieved, and how far he, or it, is expressing disgust with life in general. The confusion is natural enough, and I dare say that none of us manage to avoid it all the time; but it is not a sign of intelligence. For instance, the news-reel interpolations set some very uninspired and pious remarks by Churchill, Attlee, and Herbert Morrison alongside a much more exciting and diabolical bellow from Hitler. In the context, whether the effect is intentional or not, Hitler may seem more attractive than the "democratic" politicians. At any rate, one cannot help feeling that the hero is nearer to Hitler than to the other three, and this is not surprising since Hitlerism was, to some extent, a response to awareness of the Absurd. When the film juxtaposes these political figures without comment (this is perhaps what is meant by an "abstract" or "an event"), it appears to be equating them; but there is no doubt about the fact that, Absurd or no Absurd, in real life one has to decide whether one is going to accept the moral categories of Attlee, Morrison and Churchill, however inadequate, or the amoral category of Hitler. There is a very important difference. When the hero shouts insults at his landlady and smashes his room to pieces with an axe, he may be protesting against God and/or society, but it is the landlady who bears the brunt of the protest. When the film dwells on the gory arms of the slaughter-house worker, it is presumably expressing revulsion at the fact that human life preys on animal life; this is a universal phenomenon of nature, which has nothing to do with politics or advertising or the other evils of the modern world. To run all these issues together is just to wallow in an emotional muddle. It is this that makes the film so unsatisfactory; if the emotions were in an aesthetic pattern, the necessary intellectual distinctions would be implied.

It seems to me that one can salvage only two things from this long, and alas pretentious film. Michael Gothard, in the lead part, manages to retain sympathy in spite of all, which is no mean achievement; the photography, by Keith Allams, is often superb, and gives visual beauty to scenes that are, dramatically, quite ill-conceived.

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Kevin Crossley-Holland

Five Old English Riddles

1

I was once a warrior's weapon.
Now a noble young retainer
dresses me in threads of twisted gold
and silver. At times men kiss me,
at times I summon close friends
to do battle; a horse sometimes bears me
over the earth, sea-horses sometimes
sweep me, gleaming, over the ocean;
now and then a maiden, ring-adorned,
replenishes my paunch. I must lie on planks
at times, plundered, hard and headless;
often, gold-garbed, I hang on the wall
above drinking warriors, a splendid sight,
instrument of war. Covered in riches
I draw in breath from a brave man's lungs
when retainers ride towards battle.
At times I tell proud warriors
that wine is served; at times rally them,
save booty from hostile men, drive off
the enemy. Now ask me my name.

2

The dank earth, wondrously cold,
first delivered me from her womb.
I know in my mind I wasn't made
from wool, skilfully fashioned with skeins.
Neither warp nor weft wind about me,
no thread thrums for me in the thrashing loom,
nor does a shuttle rattle for me,
nor does the weaver's rod bang and beat me.
Silkworms didn't spin with their strange craft
for me,
those creatures that embroider cloth of gold.
Yet men will affirm all over this earth
that I'm an excellent garment.
O wise men, weigh your words
well, and say what this object is.

3

I've one mouth but many voices;
I dissemble and often change my tune;
I declaim my deathless melodies,
I don't desist from my refrain.
Aged evening-songster, I entertain
men in their homes by rehearsing
my whole repertoire; they sit, bowed down,
quiet in their houses. Guess my name,
I who mimic the jester's japes
as loudly as I can, and rejoice men
with choicest songs in various voices.

4

I travel by foot, trample the ground,
the green fields, for as long as I live.
Lifeless, I fetter dark Welshmen,
sometimes their betters too. At times
I give a warrior liquor from within me,
at times a stately bride steps on me;
sometimes a slave-girl, raven-haired,
brought far from Wales, cradles and presses
me—
some stupid, sozzled maidservant, she fills me
with water on dark nights, warms me
by the gleaming fire; with wanton hands
she hugs me to her breasts and writhes about,
then rubs me against her dark declivity.
What am I called who, alive, lay waste
the land and, dead, serve humankind?

5

I'm told a certain object grew
in the corner, rose and expanded, threw up
a crust. A proud wife carried off
that boneless wonder, the daughter of a king
covered that swollen thing with a cloth.

Answers: 1. Horn 2. Coat of Mail 3. Jay 4. Leather 5. Dough

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NOTES & TOPICS

London Commentary

The Ideology of Failure

JOHN VAIZEY in his reflections on "The Disenchanted Left" [ENCOUNTER, February] sees the central failure of the Left as intellectual: the failure of Keynesian thought. There is "incoherence in post-Keynesian thought," "the people to be blamed are the Keynesians." Vaizey ends pessimistically: "Reluctantly, I think, one must concede that running an economy to order may be beyond the power of analysis of present-day economists." I prefer, however, to see the failure not as one of intellect or of analysis, but as essentially political—the result of a failure of judgment and imagination, a failure to make clear choices and to stick to them.

For the mistakes made by the present Labour Government have not been within the sphere of economics alone. Parallel to the mistaken attempt to maintain the parity of the pound, there is the failure to assess accurately the chances of Britain entering the Common Market. Parallel to the failure to obtain economic growth, there is the failure to deal with the Rhodesian rebellion, the failure to estimate accurately the results of the policy of economic sanctions. In fact, in every sphere, the record of the government has been marked by misjudgments, so that it has not succeeded in carrying out any of its more important policies. The economic difficulties are, therefore, only part of a much wider problem: they are symptoms of political misjudgment, rather than the result of intellectual disorder.

The Government's deflationary package of July 1966 was condemned by nearly all economists. Most economists favoured devaluation. A few, amongst whom Sir Roy Harrod was the most distinguished, favoured import controls. But there was nearly universal agreement that the Government's measures were unlikely to work; it was difficult to discern any economic mechanisms which would lead the Government's policies to success.

Yet the Government persisted with a policy of deflation; they preferred to slow down economic expansion and to create unemployment, rather than alter the parity of the pound. They followed policies which they, themselves, had frequently denounced when in Opposition. The economists cannot be blamed for the political misjudgments made by the Government. Keynes himself had always opposed a policy of domestic deflation for the sake of the pound—in an impoverished world, it was better to weaken the *rentier*, rather than to cause unemployment. Nor was this a principle which any of the economists advising the Labour Government had been disposed to question. There was no *trahison des clercs*: but there was political ineptitude of the highest order.

The question we have to ask, then, is not: What is the correct analysis of the situation in which we find ourselves?—but rather: Why has the Government continually failed to take notice of sound advice? Why has there been the great discrepancy between the radical attitudes of the Labour Party when in opposition, and its conservative posture when in power?

These are political questions rather than economic ones: that is they relate to features of the political system, and its defects, rather than to technical issues. For it is here, and not in any failure of intellectual ability, that the root of the trouble lies. Writers on politics often stress that reform is dependent upon correct analysis and strategy. But they frequently overlook the fact that even the best advice is useless, unless this advice can be made politically effective. If those in power lack boldness and imagination, advice based on a radical analysis of problems will be ignored. That is what has happened in the case of the present Government over the past three years, just as it happened to the post-war Labour Government after 1947. What are the reasons for this failure of imagination?

ONE ANSWER FREQUENTLY GIVEN to this question is to refer to the failings of the Prime Minister, his untrustworthiness, his failure to inspire confidence, his essential ambiguity, etc., etc. Just as journalists built up Mr. Harold Wilson's qualities to an unreasonable degree before the election of 1964, so now they attempt reparation by casting him as the scapegoat for all our ills.

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But the kind of personalised attitude to politics which this criticism represents, is not very helpful. For despite Mr. Wilson's failings, he was found acceptable by the Party until the mistakes occurred; there were very few rumblings of discontent except on the part of the professional protesters of the Left Wing. Nor is Mr. Wilson the only leader of the Labour Party of whom it could be said that ambiguity was their main characteristic. Ramsay MacDonald and Clement Attlee were not particularly noted for their courage in facing up to painful issues, for their ability to analyse a particular problem through, or to take notice of those who had.

The roots of malaise must be sought at a different level. To discover the root cause of the trouble, one would have to penetrate into the history of the Labour Party since 1918. But one can make the reasonable conjecture that it is Mr. Wilson's very ambiguity which made him acceptable as a leader. Hugh Gaitskell found, to his cost, the response which the Labour Party gives to anyone who tries to question its most cherished ideals, such as Clause 4.

When Gaitskell attempted to delete Clause 4 from the Constitution of the Labour Party, not only the Left, but also the Trade Unions objected. Gaitskell was compelled to rest content with an "amplification of aims," accepting the existence of a mixed economy: but Clause 4 still remains in the Constitution. Roy Jenkins summed up the battle in the following way:

> Gaitskell and those who were with him tried to move an injured party into a more comfortable position, and were rewarded for their efforts with some sharp and angry cries. Even so they got it a little way, before the attempt had to be abandoned.[1]

Gaitskell attempted to speak clearly and honestly on the issues facing the Labour Party, and nearly broke it into two. Mr. Wilson was much safer—he preferred to ignore difficult issues, hoping that unpleasant problems would solve themselves; and he was supported as leader because he reflected the deepest feelings of the Labour Party. Mr. Wilson after 1964 transferred his conception of politics from the problems of the Labour Party to those of the country with disastrous results. There was nothing in Mr. Wilson's style of politics after 1959 to suggest that he was likely to favour radical solutions when in power. But the Labour Party voted for and acquiesced in this style of leadership, and they are now paying the price.

[1] *Hugh Gaitskell 1906–63*. Edited by W. T. Rodgers (Thames & Hudson, 1964), pp. 126–7.

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WHY HAS THE LABOUR PARTY consistently supported this kind of leadership? Why has it continually failed to throw up and sustain a leader of quality with the courage to face problems and deal with them in a radical and intellectualy tough way? Part of the answer is the incoherence of the Socialist rhetoric of the Labour Party. As Vaizey suggests, "at the very heart of 'socialist' theory was a completely unanalysed feeling, rather than an engine of criticism or a body of prescriptive doctrine." Certainly the rhetoric of socialism cannot tell one whether to devalue or not, whether to stay East of Suez, whether to deal with the Rhodesian problem by using force. To ask for a "Socialist" solution to these problems is to ask for something which does not exist. But over and above this, the necessity of justifying any particular policy step by characterising it as in conformity with socialism, serves to distort one's vision so that one does not appreciate the true nature of the problem to be faced.

A clear example of the distortion which rhetoric brings about can be seen in the sphere of economic policy. For the instincts or "prejudices," as Burke would have it, of the Labour Party imply a central concern with the public ownership of industry. Coherent planning is only possible if the "commanding heights" of the economy are owned by the State. Of course, no member of the Cabinet takes these instincts very seriously: even the most extreme Left-wing minister appreciates that it is only possible to nationalise a few industries in one five-year term. And yet because of the distrust of private industry which the instincts generate, it becomes impossible to devise a coherent and realistic planning policy for a Mixed Economy. On the one hand, private industry is relied upon as the main engine of economic growth: on the other hand taxation is so arranged as to penalise the private *entrepreneur*. Thus, after devaluation private industry is urged to expand its export sales; at the same time corporation tax is increased.

The instincts of the Labour Party would only remain valuable if there was a serious possibility of taking the whole of private industry under public control in one five-year term. In fact this never has been a possibility. And in practice the Labour Party has not attempted to create a different society from that of "contemporary capitalism": instead they have claimed to be able to manage it more efficiently as well as more humanely. But they have been crippled in their attempts to do this by a wholly contradictory rhetoric. This rhetoric prevents it from being a party which is able to make use of the advice of economists and others to put into practice the policies upon which it was elected.

The central weakness of the Labour Party in Britain has always been the same: it has combined a moral, humanitarian critique of society with a cloudy ideal of human betterment, but it has never been able to bring critique and ideal into contact. It has never been able to work out a strategy of reform, a way in which the critique can be made effective.

THIS POINT MAY BE PUT in a slightly different way, which owes much to Keynes—if only the Labour Party had really digested Keynes! In his essay "The End of Laissez-Faire," written in 1926, Keynes exhorted politicians to move away from the sterile "metaphysical" debates over the general questions of laissez-faire and socialism, and to distinguish carefully between the "Agenda" and the "Non-Agenda" of politics. An example of an issue which was not on the Agenda was the nationalisation of the railways, in that it could do nothing to help solve the economic crisis of the 1920s.

The Labour Party's adherence to a vague, unsubstantiated "socialism" prevents them from compiling a proper agenda of political change, just as it prevented them from seeing the significance of Keynes' economic ideas in the 1930s. Socialism itself is never on the agenda, in the sense that it is never a real issue at any one election. There is never a particular time at which one can be said to be voting for the implementation of the Socialist commonwealth. Rather one votes for a small segment of the total programme every five years: meanwhile, however, the crises which constitute the Agenda become worse and worse.

The rhetorical nature of Labour's slogans serves to conceal the fact that on any issue which constitutes part of the Agenda, the Labour Party is divided. On Devaluation, on East of Suez, on the Common Market, on Viet Nam, on Incomes policy—on all these issues, the split is between wings of the Labour Party, rather than between the Labour and Conservative Parties. The rhetoric of "Socialism" serves to conceal these splits; and Mr. Wilson is the ideal dispenser of this rhetoric.

Seen in this light, the maintenance of military bases East of Suez constitutes a "Socialist" willingness to participate in regional defence plus leading to collective security: withdrawal on the other hand "opens the road to Socialism," by ending the responsibilities of Empire. This view of politics reaches its apogee in Mr. R. H. S. Crossman, for whom British politics since November consists solely of great strides towards the Socialist millennium.

A party which is divided on central issues of policy is unable to sustain a strong government,

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a government which creates its own issues, and follows radical and imaginative policies. If the Labour Government had acted strongly and boldly on any of the important issues facing it, it would have succeeded only in spreading disaffection within the party. Inaction and ambiguity become necessary conditions for maintaining the unity of the party. The blurring of issues becomes a necessary skill for any Labour leader who wishes to maintain his position.

In practice this blurring of issues places the government in a conservative posture; for if no drastic departures from established policies are allowed, the status quo remains untouched. The ambiguity of Mr. Wilson is different from that practised by Harold Macmillan in that it conceals no attempt to "educate" the party to acceptance of any new policy. Macmillan was successful in persuading the Conservatives to accept economic planning and the Common Market; Mr. Wilson's style is wholly different. It is characterised by an unwillingness to create issues, to make necessary political choices; instead options are kept open, seemingly for all time, and problems are swept under the carpet.

Over issues such as economic policy, the Sterling Area, Rhodesia and East of Suez, the government has preferred to maintain existing positions, rather than weigh up alternatives in order to make a correct political estimate of the situation. This kind of government is the very antithesis of radicalism. But this kind of government is also necessary if the Labour Party is to be preserved as a political force. Paradoxically the continued existence of the Labour Party requires it to adopt a conservative posture.

MY OWN EXPLANATION, then, of the failure of the Labour Government and of the consequent disenchantment of the Left is a political one. It rests upon the nature of the Labour Party and its essential incapacity as an engine of government. The conventional view of the Labour Party is that it is a pragmatic party of piecemeal social reform, in contrast perhaps to the Social Democratic parties of the continent. If the Labour Party was ever a doctrinaire and ideological party, it is argued, the doctrine and ideology have long since been shed. I believe this view to be profoundly mistaken. The Labour Party seems to me to be a rigid and inflexible party not perhaps in the beliefs it professes, but in its underlying attitudes to social reform and, in particular, to economic questions.

The successes of the Labour Party have traditionally been in areas of policy where what is

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involved has been the application of one central idea to a situation. In colonial affairs, the Labour Party has generally succeeded in its policy of self-determination. On the domestic scene, whatever the tactical mistakes and the resulting inefficiencies, the idea of nationalisation has been brought to fruition. But in situations where what is required is a greater measure of flexibility and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, the programmatic nature of the Labour Party condemns it to failure. Their planning before the election of 1964 was based upon the assumption that they would be returned to power at a time of economic stagnation; instead the election was held at the top of a boom with a large Balance of Payments deficit. The Government were never able to adapt their thinking to adjust to the changed situation: therefore they never gained the initiative over the economic situation, and they were forced to react to events rather than mastering them. This same kind of lack of flexibility can be seen operating in other spheres of policy.

Until 1951, this central weakness in the adaptability of the Labour Party was masked by the Fabian strategy of advance towards a society in which all "the means of production, distribution, and exchange" were owned by the State. The Fabians had supplied in the Constitution of 1918 the strategy which the British Labour Party were to follow. By 1951, however, scepticism about the value of nationalisation had set in, and with it doubts about whether it would lead to the humanitarian goal which socialists set themselves. Unfortunately no strategy has been discovered to replace that propounded by the Fabians; Mr. Wilson's union of socialism with science has always been a surrogate substitute: and yet the totalistic attitude which went with the Fabian analysis, the idea that capitalism as a total social system had to be reformed, rather than particular manifestations of injustice, has remained. In this sense the Labour Party has the worst of both worlds, in that it possesses an ideological attitude without any strategy, any "union of theory and practice" which alone can validate this attitude. And now the irrelevant dogfight between "socialist" and "capitalist" prevents a real understanding of the sources of power in British life, and the carrying out of radical reforms based upon such an understanding.

The Webbs despised the radical, improvisatory attitude to social reform; for them reform had to follow from a set of very general laws about society, from the possession of a science of society which can adequately explain the root causes of social evils. Political flexibility they saw as a lack of intellectual toughness, a superficiality which failed to trace the root causes of social problems. The husk of this attitude remains with the Labour Party today: it is easier to disown an ideology than to destroy its influence upon one's thinking.

IT IS DIFFICULT, therefore, to accept Vaizey's diagnosis of the failure as a failure of Keynesian thought. Keynesian theory and socialism were always held together by only tenuous links. The Keynesian ideal of temporary and limited intervention to resuscitate an individualistic society is worlds away from the totalistic collectivism which is the instinctive response of socialist thought. Even in temperament the intellectual flexibility of a Keynes lies in sharp contrast to the lumbering ponderousness of socialist theorists.

And if one cannot accept Vaizey's account of the failure of Keynesian thought, neither can one acquiesce in his description of the failure of the Left as "a failure of the Liberal Left." The truth is that liberal and radical ideas have failed to exert any influence on the present government in the crucial spheres of economic and foreign policy. And so those who genuinely voted for policies of radical change in 1964 and 1966 remain frustrated as a result of the inflexibility of the politicians and the atrophy of a political system which allows the inflexible into positions of power. In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that there has been a general failure to solve political problems over the past three years, and an acceleration of decline.

Anyone who wishes to correct this situation must apply himself to the study of politics. He must study the politics of 20th century Britain, and discover how the political system has reached its present state. Then it will become clear precisely what political reforms are necessary. We have for too long tended to look at politics as part of the "super-structure" of affairs, with economics and technology as the base. The conclusion to the present discussion must be that, as in the Victorian period, political reform is the key to social and economic reform.

Vernon Bogdanor

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The French Power Élite

Letter from Paris — By ALFRED GROSSER

IF ONE CONSIDERS the Establishment or the so-called Power Structure of contemporary society as a whole, then many things in France are as they are elsewhere in Western Europe; but many are quite different, both in reality and in the idea that people have of them. For example, some have only to be born into certain families to belong to France's power *élite*; most Frenchmen, however hard they try, are condemned by birth to remain outside it.

In Germany the expression *die da oben*, "those at the top," is accompanied by a great deal of resignation: that is the way things are, and you have to put up with it. The greatest virtue is *Ehrfurcht* (reverence), as Goethe pointed out; and Luther in his time based his defence of the principle of authority on the equation: birth equals vocation (*Beruf=Berufung*). In France one sometimes comes across resignation too, but there is much more protest, rebelliousness, or at any rate aversion to things as they are. That has something to do with the Communist Party's five million votes.

There are both good and bad reasons for the refusal to accept things as they are. There is the educational system that uses authoritarian methods to impart an *esprit critique* and thus produces both a sense of liberty and of everlasting individual opposition; and the principle of equality, which produces both a desire for progress and a permanent envy of any kind of superiority and an irrepressible spirit of *raillerie*.

An important factor is Paris itself. Not the *tout Paris* of *soirées* and first nights, which barely possesses the power to dictate fashion in dress or in art, let alone influence politics, economics, or intellectual life. Some members of the power *élite* belong to it, but others do not. Pompidou does, but not Debré; François Mauriac, but not André Malraux. This has little to do with the "Establishment." Nor is the Paris referred to here the omnivorous leviathan, the vampire that sucks the blood of the rest of France, as described in that celebrated book by J. F. Gravier *Paris et le désert français* which set the tone for many foreign observers resident in Paris. The Paris I mean is the Paris that is the seat of authority—all forms of authority.

The University of Paris is the summit to which almost every professor in the provinces aspires (often only to spend the rest of his life recovering his breath if he gets there). In his comedy *Intermezzo*, Jean Giraudoux describes the career of a civil servant whose supreme ambition is to be posted to Paris. It is not for nothing that when one comes from Lille, Marseilles, or Brest, in common parlance *on monte à Paris*. A study of the origin of 2,000 "prominent personalities" (or VIPs) showed that a Frenchman born in Paris has a five times better chance of becoming "prominent" in the land of equality and fraternity than a fellow-countryman born in a provincial town with a population of 2,000.

But in this respect the position does not differ greatly from that in neighbouring countries, where a similar study would produce not dissimilar results. Of 100,000 Frenchmen born in places with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, 1·5 achieve "prominence." The corresponding figures for towns with a population between 2,000 and 20,000 and between 20,000 and 100,000 are 3·7 and 9·3. For towns with a population exceeding 100,000 the figure increases to 11·1, while for Paris it is 18·1.

That is an aspect of social inequality that is too often ignored. Better known, of course, is the fact that a son's future depends on his father's status. Of the fathers of the 2,000 VIPs who were the subjects of the study, 2·8 per cent belonged to the working class, 17·2 per cent were

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employers, 3·7 per cent office workers, 22·8 per cent senior officials, 5·7 per cent peasants, and 22·3 per cent physicians or lawyers. Of the professors included in the study, two per cent were the sons of workers, while 36 per cent were the sons of senior officials (including professors). When the classification of "worker" and "peasant" is looked at more closely, the situation is worse. Among former students of the *grandes écoles*—which are the *élite*-producing colleges—the percentage of sons of manual workers was *nil* and of agricultural workers 0·1.

How does one get to the top? In the first place the question must be asked in terms of education. There are special cases—splendid exceptions—that show what might happen if the school system not only taught but educated. The most effective youth associations, which are the Catholic ones, regard this as their principal task. Here is a not completely isolated example. A worker's son from Clermont-Ferrand, who at the age of fourteen naturally went to work in the Michelin rubber works, went from there to the *J.O.C.* (Catholic young workers' association), was promoted inside the movement and educated through the exercise of practical responsibilities. He is now the director of the biggest Catholic publishing house in France. Without the *J.O.C.* he would no doubt be a factory foreman, for the normal way to the top is only by way of numerous competitive examinations.

The French system is an *élite* system. Pupils are placed in order of merit at the end of the first year at elementary school, and each year thereafter the distribution of prizes at the end of the last school term is one of the most deeply rooted French customs. In Germany, failing in the *Abitur*, the school-leaving examination, is a disgrace; in France, passing the *baccalauréat* is a recognised distinction. Whatever you want to be, whether a post office official, a teacher at a *lycée*, or an army officer, almost inevitably you have to take the hurdle of one or more *concours*. If from 70 to 90 per cent of the candidates fail in these competitive examinations, it is considered that a satisfactory level has been maintained.

Of especial importance in the education of the *élite* are the *grandes écoles*: including the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales* and the schools of engineering (*École Centrale*, *École des Mines*, etc.). A special place is occupied by the *École Polytechnique*, not because it is dependent on the Defence Ministry (only a small

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proportion of each year's intake goes into the Army), but because to a *polytechnicien* the way lies open to almost any position in the economy or the governmental apparatus.

There are two other "schools" of crucial importance in the formation of the *élite*. The *École Normale Supérieure* is theoretically intended to prepare candidates for the *agrégation*, the state competitive examination for teaching posts at *lycées* and universities. Actually for more than a century-and-a-half the Rue d'Ulm has been the place where future philosophers and Ministers, writers and party leaders, spend three years preparing themselves to put intelligence and culture in the place of expertise and so to exercise influence in every field. Perhaps no better example can be cited than Georges Pompidou, who is typical also by reason of his antecedents. His father was an elementary-school master, educated at an *école normale d'instituteurs*. His dream for his son was the *École Normale Supérieure*, and thanks to young Georges' gifts (and the French scholarship system) the dream came true. An *agrégé des lettres—i.e.*, a qualified teacher of French literature, Latin and Greek—he has in the past twenty years been a member of the *Conseil d'État* (which is, among other things, the highest administrative court), director at the Rothschild Bank, and member of the Constitutional Council. He is now Prime Minister, and in every one of these posts he has acquitted himself well, as is only to be expected of a *normalien*.

The *École Nationale d'Administration* was founded in 1945, and it is no longer possible to reach senior civil service rank without having passed through it. On leaving the *E.N.A.* one becomes a senior grade official straight away. But everything depends on one's position in the examination list; the higher up one is, the wider the field that is open. The first three or four become *inspecteurs des finances*; the next few go to the *Conseil d'État*, the next to the *Cour des Comptes*. Membership of these three *grands corps* (I want to describe them in greater detail below) provides the best *entrée* to positions of power in the administration, the economy, or the government. Those not too disappointed—say Nos. 20–25 or thereabouts—become diplomatists or prefects. The majority become *administrateurs civils*, who enter ministries at a relatively high grade.

This system, like any other, has its advantages and disadvantages. Probably the greatest disadvantage is that the results of the competitive examination affect the candidate's whole future. The ability to put *ancien élève de* — after one's name often counts for more than actual per-

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formance, subsequent personal development, or acquisition of qualifications. Also the middle ranks of society are very neglected. The minor *élite* of the *grandes écoles* is of great worth (and often unfortunately aware of it to the point of conceit and exclusiveness); one only has to ask German or Italian negotiators, or officials in Brussels. But there is a lack of educational facilities for those who do not survive the competitive examinations.

The advantages seem particularly great in comparison with, say, the German system. There are no student-corps or *alte Herren* with all their consequences. There is a bond between *anciens élèves,* but it is the product of their education, *not* of their social origin. The written part of the competitive examination in France is strictly anonymous. Social origin affects the individual's chances of getting an education, but *not* the selection of the *élite* itself. Above all, the system results in responsible positions being reached much earlier in life.

WHY NOT NAME names? Jean-François Deniau, after obtaining the diploma of the *Institut d'Études Politiques* and graduating both in philosophy and law, entered the *E.N.A.* in 1950. In 1952 he became an *inspecteur des finances*. In 1958, still under the age of thirty, he went to the European Economic Community in Brussels as head of the department dealing with non-member states. From 1959 to 1963 he was director-general with responsibility for negotiations with states applying for entry. In 1963 he was Ambassador to Mauritania. Now he is a member of the new joint executive of the European Community.

Then there are François Ortoli and Alain Peyrefitte. Both were born in 1925. Ortoli is now a Minister. He was an *inspecteur des finances* at twenty-three, head of the trade policy department in the Economics Ministry at thirty-two, director-general for the internal market in the *E.E.C.* at thirty-three, and at forty-one he was head of the Planning Commission. Peyrefitte went to the *E.N.A.* after passing through the *École Normale Supérieure*. He entered the diplomatic service, and became a deputy in 1958. Now he is Minister of Education.

Another example is Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, born in 1926. He became an *inspecteur des finances* in 1952. In 1959 he became a state secretary and in 1962 a Minister. None of these cases is exceptional.

It is not such a great exaggeration to say that in France one can become a Minister at an age when in other countries one is still serving one's apprenticeship. Perhaps I may be permitted a personal reminiscence. In 1948, when I was twenty-three, I was invited to deliver a lecture at Hamburg University, having become an *agrégé* the year before. "The speaker's son, I presume," the representative of the university replied when I introduced myself to him at the railway station.

WHOSE HANDS control the levers of power? Let me first look at the economic field: because in France as elsewhere people incline to believe that the men who control "the great monopolies" control everything else too.

This idea pleases the powerless, because when they are told who-owns-what they believe they are getting a real glimpse behind the scenes. The reader of the great satirical weekly *Le Canard Enchainé* often gets the impression that he is right to regard politics with critical aversion and to keep out of them, because it is money that pulls the strings. This idea also pleases those who have the money: it makes them believe they have all the real power.

The ideology doesn't quite fit the realities. Economic power influences politics, but can also be crushed by it. In present-day France there is yet another reason for qualifying what is of course sometimes the correct view of the political influence of *Kapital*. So many sectors of industry, communications, and banking have come into the hands of the state since 1946 that it would not be impossible for it to base its political on its economic power.

The consequence is that those in positions of economic power are often senior officials from the *Inspection des Finances* or the *Conseil d'État*, who have held high positions in the political state administration. Examples are Georges Galichon, the president of *Air France*; Roger Belin, head of the Paris public transport systems; and André Ségalat, president of the French Railways. They are all *conseillers d'état*. The first was General de Gaulle's *directeur du cabinet* (roughly corresponding to principal private secretary), and the other two had each been *sécretaire général du gouvernement* (state secretary in the Prime Minister's office responsible for co-ordination of the work of the civil service). The new president of one of the principal French banks, the *Crédit Lyonnais*, is François Bloch-Lainé, the prototype of all young *inspecteurs des finances*, whose ideal is selfless service of the state. Pierre Massé left the Planning Commission to become president of the nationalised *Électricité de France*. The head of the French oil industry is Pierre Guillaumat, like Massé a *polytechnicien* and

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for many years head of the mining department in the administration in Indo-China and Tunisia. From 1951 to 1958 he was the administrator of the Atomic Energy Commission, and was then a Minister for four years.

There is also the fact that many concerns in the private sector are headed by former senior officials. *Phogil*, one of the biggest chemical companies (soon to be overshadowed by the chemical enterprise to be set up by the nationalised *Charbonnages de France*), has recently acquired a new head. He is Gilles Brac de la Perrière, aged forty. He was at the *E.N.A.* from 1952 to 1954, is an *inspecteur des finances*, and has hitherto been with the Planning Commission. The president of the umbrella association of the French insurance industry, Pierre Moussa, a *normalien* and an *inspecteur des finances*, was previously a senior civil servant and then a high official of the World Bank.

WHAT THE IMPACT of all this is on the exercise of power is hard to say. Do the former *inspecteurs des finances* influence private industry in the direction of the public interest which it was their duty as civil servants to protect? Or do the younger *inspecteurs des finances* in the state apparatus administer the economic and financial structure in favour of private interests because their counterparts in the latter were their elders at the *E.N.A.*—or because they hope later to secure high positions in the industries with which they officially negotiate? There is also the fact that a number of senior officials are sons, nephews, sons-in-law or brothers-in-law of heads of great enterprises.

FOR SOME YEARS past there has broadly speaking been one great path to political power. True, the old paths still remain open. One of them, now considerably less promising than it was in the days when the political parties were influential, is by way of a party apparatus. The other—which might be called the classical French route to political power—runs by way of a communal and then a departmental council to the National Assembly and a seat in the government. But today, generally speaking, things have changed. The path runs by way of the *E.N.A.*, the *grand corps*, the *cabinet ministériel*, election to the Assembly and then a Ministry (with or without the parliamentary détour). The *cabinet* is an institution peculiar to France. The personal staff of the President, Prime Minister, or other Ministers is often more powerful than the civil service head of the department. Half a century ago *cabinets* were

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staffed by political journalists, aides of climbing politicians, *et al.*; nowadays most of the principal figures in them are products of the *E.N.A.*

And intellectual power? It is hard to make comparisons with the rest of Europe. In France the professor enjoys less prestige than he does, say, in Germany, but he is not isolated from public life. This is partly because relations between senior officialdom and university and between press and university are different. It is also perhaps partly due to the fact that—at any rate since Voltaire—the intellectual enjoys a political prestige which is often undeserved but is gratifyingly different from the German tradition of his "corrupting" (*zersetzende*) influence. President de Gaulle's letter to Jean-Paul Sartre defending his negative attitude to Bertrand Russell's Viet Nam tribunal need only be compared with certain famous statements by Chancellor Ludwig Erhard about Günter Grass and others. True, Kiesinger is not Erhard, and during the Algerian war statements were made on the government side in Paris that were not dissimilar in kind from the narrow-minded utterances of German nationalists. But Sartre or Malraux are respected even by their opponents, and André Malraux has at least a symbolic significance as one of de Gaulle's Ministers.

The problem of the control of the mass communications media, however, is similar to that in the rest of the western world—though with some exceptions, particularly in regard to radio and television which, in spite of a relatively liberal charter introduced in 1964, remain government-controlled. (Incidentally the Head of the combined services is an *inspecteur des finances*, and the Head of television was until September 1967, a member of the diplomatic service who was in the *cabinet* of the Information Minister; and both are products of the *E.N.A.*) Though there is no French press empire on the scale corresponding to the Springer or Thomson empires in Germany and Britain, the independence of most newspapers is restricted by the men behind the scene. But good journalists are influential, perhaps less so than in the United States but more so than in Germany; and to become a journalist the ladder of a political party or the *E.N.A.* (though one ex-*E.N.A.* man is on the staff of *Le Monde*) is not essential.

THERE ARE SOME French peculiarities about which a lot more could be said; *e.g.*, the part in the renewal of the French Establishment played by the *Résistance* which has developed practically into a monopoly, and the mutual effects which Gaullism and social change have had on each other. But it is perhaps more important to conclude what is in any case an inadequate survey with a basic question which is difficult to answer. What do the controllers really control, and in which direction are they moving?

To enquire into the extent to which a common policy can be attributed to the French ruling caste would require a whole book. It has of course a number of characteristic features, *e.g.*, an emphasis on planning and the role of the state. The *École Nationale d'Administration* puts its stamp on its products called "*les émarques*." But the mere fact that two of the most interesting personalities in French politics, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (the leader of the economically liberal right) and Michel Rocard (the new, barely thirty-year-old chairman of the *P.S.U.*, the small "ultra-Bevanist" leftist party) are both *inspecteurs des finances*, should make one pause. On all the vital questions of the past ten or twenty years, whether that of decolonisation or that of Europe, the *élite* has been just as split as the rest of France.

It is even harder to say what changes in economics, politics, and society in general have been brought about by deliberate choice. When one sees how similar in many fields developments have been in France and Sweden, in Britain and West Germany, one is bound to have doubts about the power of the powerful to determine the future of a mature or industrial society.

That does not alter the fact that a dominant caste exists and that its existence is an important factor in political and social attitudes—particularly among the young who rebel against the Establishment (sometimes only for a few years before joining it themselves). Their revolt resembles in many respects the students' revolt in other countries, with Fidel Castro or Ché Guevara or Mao as its heroes—Jean-Luc Godard's recent film *La Chinoise* is an excellent illustration. But many of the factors that put brakes and limitations on revulsion from the full-bellied consumer's society differ from those that apply in affluent Western Germany's Federal Republic, for instance.

Membership of the strong Communist Party still offers many a straightforward way of proclaiming their protest. Others join the numerous organisations that exist in France to help the under-privileged, or go to Africa. There are many whose dislike of money power merely takes the form of the anti-Americanism practised by French policy. Above all, resentment at the domination of everyday life by the Establishment is countered by the prestige and greatness of the *Président de la République*.

This last function of Gaullism is certainly one unique feature of contemporary France, a protective colouration of *grandeur* which no other power *élite* enjoys.

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Letter from Germany

The Easter Riots

By Theo Sommer

THE SHOTS fired on Maundy Thursday, our Gründonnerstag will echo through Germany for a long time to come. The attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke and the Easter riots mark the end of an epoch. Only now is the Post-War period really over—an era of solid reasonableness during which the war-time generation of Germans put together a new world. Now the peace-time generation is stirring. The sons want an even newer world—the old one is too well-behaved, too deeply attached to the established state of affairs, too lacking in dynamism. The fathers, on the other hand, point proudly to what has been achieved, the inviolability of which means more to them than the youthful urge to reform.

And yet the really positive achievement of the last twenty years threatens to get lost: the agreement, despite all differences of *aims*, on the political *method*, on maintaining the rule of reason. Today one side argues with flaming torches and cobblestones, the other with rubber truncheons and water-cannons. For the first time since 1949 we must seriously ask ourselves whether Bonn is not Weimar after all—or might not become Weimar. Even observers to whom all dramatisation is anathema have begun to fear that things will get far worse before they can get better. A half-dead Dutschke is evidently insufficient to bring people to their senses.

And this is the sad thing that has to be said after the attempted murder on Berlin's Kurfürstendamm; up to now it has had no purifying effect. A chance of catharsis seems to have been missed. The radical students took refuge from the situation by running amok all over the country; the governmental powers everywhere indulged in a revolting orgy of brutality; the highest authorities wallowed in disgusting self-satisfaction, until finally, after three days, Federal Minister of Justice Gustav Heinemann uttered the first words of self-criticism. Even after his return from America, however, Axel Springer—who, largely through the editorial line of his own newspapers, had become the target of the demonstrations—uttered not a sentence, not a word of dismay, not a word of understanding. And yet empathy would have been very much in place: the realisation that through the years he had gravely affected the Bonn State with his secret longing for "disciplined democracy"; that by constantly vilifying the Left "intelligentsia" he had merely exasperated them beyond endurance; that he was reaping the whirlwind where he had intended to sow a calm. Instead, most of the Springer papers, published now behind barbed-wire entanglements and police cordons, erected monuments of self-righteousness to themselves out of printer's ink and paper.

In the face of such blindness in all quarters, how could reconciliation possibly take place, that fresh start, a *Neue Anfang*, so imploringly demanded by a small band of the upright in Berlin?

No, if any good is eventually to come out of the horrid Easter days people must first come to realise that no one is without guilt for our national life having taken a wrong turn—neither the students nor the Springer press, neither the *Obrigkeit* nor the party politicians. The wretched would-be assassin Josef Bachmann must not be used as a pretext to halt the necessary examination of the German conscience. Like most of the assassins of history, he is a "crazed loner," but—again like most of his kind—he is at the same time indirectly the product of his environment. A political murder is always the point at which the two essential lines of all historical events intersect: an individual will and a collective consciousness. Such murders are never pure chance.

But here the students—or at least their extreme left spearhead in the *SDS*—must take the blame for having themselves helped to prepare the ground for the attempted murder by their advocacy of violence as a means of political controversy. (One of the signs in their February demonstration said: "WE NEED A LEE OSWALD.") This must not be understood in the easy sense that the man who was almost murdered is guilty, not the man who almost murdered him. Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the fact that the *SDS* preached violence, even if it was usually disguised as "demonstrative and provocative *counter*-violence."

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Dutschke expressed himself ambiguously on this point. He always put his faith primarily on the enlightenment of man, on "awakening the consciousness" of the masses; nevertheless he did not expressly exclude force. It's no longer the time for "sober and cool reflection," but for mobilisation, he said recently, and he called for the "disruption of the State apparatus." What effect could this have but the encouragement of arbitrary, violent impulses? No dialectical interplay with ideas can absolve the armchair activists of the *SDS* of having fathered the recent excesses. The students—and not only those of the extreme Left—wanted what they, in their psycho-sociological jargon, call *"provozierende Irrationalität"* (provocative irrationality). The effect was merely to arouse the irrational forces on the other side.

Not that the *Bild Zeitung* and the Berlin Springer papers needed any prodding. These publications countered the "permanent scandalisation of society" by the students with a permanent calumniation of the students—and their description of it as an "incitement to a pogrom" does not seem too far-fetched. There is no lack of evidence for the spreading of false reports (the visit of Vice-President Hubert Humphrey), the hair-raising suppression of news (after the visit of the Persian Shah), and emotional campaigns based on angry letters-to-the-editor. One could quote innumerable statements calculated to incite the Berliners to take the law into their own hands—most recently on 7 February in the *Bild*: "The dirty work must not all be left to the police and their water-cannons." Add to this the loathsome jargon: *Krawalltüten* (rowdies), *Politgammler* (political beatniks), "matriculated mob," etc. Anyone who thus appeals to the gutter must not be surprised if he thereby calls people out into the streets—and loosens the brakes of reason in the administration. Armchair activists on the newspapers are worse than those of the *SDS*: they ought to know better.

Nevertheless, it must be clearly stated that however much objectionable matter there may be in the Springer papers, this surely justifies legislative measures against inflammatory journalism with a near-monopoly of the market, but not the riotous onslaught on the firm's printing-presses, not stone-throwing and arson, not the attempt to undermine the freedom of the Press by physically blocking the delivery of unpopular newspapers. This attempt must indeed be thwarted; for if today the *SDS* was allowed to lay hands on papers of the Right, there would be no means of calling a halt tomorrow if neo-Nazi storm troops from the *NPD* were to burn down liberal and left publications. In general there is a grave danger that the Dutschkists may be sowing where one day the Right will reap; that one extreme may cause the rise of the other, as on a seesaw; that instead of the "fraternal union with the workers" hoped for by the *SDS*, they will merely start up an avalanche of petty bourgeois anti-intellectualism.

Naturally, protecting the freedom of the Press must not degenerate into unrestrained police terror. Violent strategies for the sake of law and order only make matters worse. They merely foster the solidarity of the student majority with the minority of extremists.

Anyone who condemns the excesses of the students must also condemn the excesses of the police. Blind and senseless onslaughts with rubber truncheons, such as we witnessed everywhere at Easter, can force even a prejudiced onlooker into sympathy with the demonstrators. And on top of this there is the intellectual helplessness displayed by members of the Government. Conrad Ahlers came first with empty pronouncements; then Chancellor Kiesinger, eloquent but without a sign of any deeper understanding of what was at stake; and finally, Mayor Klaus Schütz with his hopelessly wooden attitude of *Mir-kann-keiner*, "no one can fool me." Poor Germany, whose elected rulers offer a continuous dialogue and debate with the leaders of the so-called extra-parliamentary opposition, but are then scared out of their wits when the spokesmen of the *SDS* bring a tape-recorder with them!

As for all the other politicians—they were away on their Easter holidays. They once allowed themselves to be recalled from their summer holidays by the *Bild Zeitung* (the legislative issue was the much-disputed rise in telephone charges), but this time the appeal to summon a special session fell on deaf ears. When will the *Bundestag* ever deal with a burning problem before it has been debated for hours on end on the late-night programmes?

Our parliamentary representatives have little feeling for the temper of the times—nor for their share of blame for an alienated youth. They are happy and content if every year they can put together an acceptable Budget, and with a bit of luck are able to reach agreement over this or that practical problem. But they want nothing to do with *Wertfragen*, with questions involving "values." They shut their ears to the wishes of the next generation. They seek "consensus" in immobility, not in movement. In the Grand Coalition they blur the political fronts, instead of bringing them into view—which alone could involve and divert the extra-parliamentary opposition. They are frightened of conflict, but where will the impulse to progress

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come if not from the clash of opinions? Even within the smaller political groups conformity is the rule. What is there left for the dissidents to do but to develop their ideas outside parliament?

THE RADICAL CENTRE, the *radikale Mitte*, around which post-war German life has revolved, has so far put up with all this. It has trusted too much to the power of sensible criticism and the automatic process of evolution. From now on the liberals and the progressive conservatives will have to duel with a sharper blade. Between the mindless force of an administration without a programme and the heartless force of protesters without a goal, there must be a third way—permanent reform, continually developing the existing system without shattering its foundations. The real capacity for effective change must become the decisive factor.

The attack on Rudi Dutschke's life was only the pretext, not the cause of the Easter Rising of 1968. The cause is youth's despair of the capacity of our system to change. No practical refutation of its thesis has yet been offered. In case of need, democracy will have to defend its existence even with police clubs and tear gas. But before it comes to that, there are two other means: controversy by dialogue, and persuasion by achievement. To renounce these means would be the capitulation of reason before unreason, the surrender of the centre to the extremes.

THE SHOCK of the two deaths in Munich has produced a pause in the escalating conflict between the radical students and the authoritarian *Obrigkeit*. Since the news of the fatal head-wounds there have been raging debates in the universities, and the result seems to be clear: the great majority rejects the rabid theorems of the *SDS*, and especially the sophistical distinction between "violence against institutions" and "violence against persons." Perhaps the stone which killed young Klaus Frings was intended for an "institution," the windshield of a Springer newspaper delivery-van. In any case the *SDS* lost its credibility when it spoke against "sentimentality" (*Rührseligkeit*) and proclaimed that not Gandhi was its guide, but Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Mao, and their unequivocal principle of "revolutionary force."

Still, if the overwhelming feeling of the students is against the tactics of the *SDS*, it is obvious that they share at present a sharply critical view of state and society. There need be no illusions on this score. Youth wants change, and in the words of Jakob Burckhardt which were quoted to me, "Even to achieve a very little, History demands enormous events and quite disproportionate noise-making. . . ."

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But there is another remark of Burckhardt's which is relevant: "The new generation ignores all the demands put to them and longs for a new revolution.... And so a spirit of innovation and reformation rises again, and all the bitter institutional victories will not prevent an ultimate defeat from the secondary and tertiary consequences of the continuing crisis. *Les institutions périssent par leurs victoires*—institutions perish by their victories...."

The tumult and the shouting will die down only when *die Herrschenden* demonstrate their willingness and ability to reform. At that point the tactical alliance between the young moderates and the revolutionaries will crumble. But how can this happen so long as justified demands are ignored and the fathers think only of boxing the ears of the sons. What kind of an answer are truncheons and cold showers? When will the "Establishment" learn to set a premium on reforms and steady renewal? To Rudi Dutschke's slogan, "Revolutionise the Revolutionaries!" one must set one of our own, "Reform the Reformers!"

Writers in Prison

A Protest Meeting in London

Arthur Miller:

I FEEL it necessary to express a certain feeling of humility before the many people in the Soviet Union, people both in and out of government, who find themselves powerless to materially alter official policy toward the imprisoned writers. It is a humility born of the Viet Nam war which so many Americans, myself included, believe to be a monstrous injustice and a crime against millions of innocent people. A war against which until now no protest has prevailed.

I do not wish to repeat what I am sure will be a thorough documentation of the situation, so I will confine myself to a single point. Those in the Soviet Union who justify the jailing of writers always insist that these prosecutions do not really represent cultural repression because the individuals involved committed infractions of one or another civil law. We are asked to believe that they are not prosecuted primarily as writers.

But the truth is that writers are never prosecuted as writers. There is always some other reason. When I was hauled up before the House Committee on Un-American Activities a decade ago, it was for allegedly misusing an American passport. The charge was annulled (and the sentence of a year in jail) by a higher court, but in the course of my interrogation the Congressmen made perfectly clear their intentions. As one of them expressed it, he hoped that I would not write so tragically in such a happy country.

Indeed, I could not help but find in the transcript of the Sinyavski-Daniel trials an extraordinary similarity to what I and many Americans have gone through before these committees. There is the same pretence that the writer is free, while at the same time he is held up to scorn; the same quite uninformed and even stupid questioning about literary matters. In short, I protest what has happened to some Soviet writers because I know quite well what this kind of interrogation means. The difference, of course, is that the Russians have been given sentences in jail which are normally reserved for desperate criminals.

The terrible irony is that these prosecutions nullify so much progress in the relations between the Soviet Union and the West. On any rational basis it is impossible to understand what it is thought these prosecutions have done to benefit the Soviet Union. In the face of its immense power, its progress, and the official resolve to destroy the old impression of a tyrannical régime, to prosecute writers on grounds which no person of intelligence can credit is to broadcast to the world the suspicion that the Soviet Government is in fact insecure, mean, and fearful of its own intellectuals.

For myself, therefore, a protest is necessary and even imperative, so that there may be no illusion among those who make Soviet policy that the justifications advanced for these prosecutions are acceptable. I believe it a tragic fact that precisely at the time when the world

THESE *texts were messages and addresses to a recent meeting held in London by the International P.E.N. Defence Committee for Soviet and Greek Writers in Prison. Arthur Miller, Günter Grass, and Graham Greene are (with François Mauriac and Ignazio Silone) all Chairmen of the International Committee, whose General Secretary is Mr. David Carver.*

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is becoming more aware of the achievements of Russian writers, when people of every political viewpoint have come to understand Soviet reality rather than rejecting it out of hand—exactly at this time official organs of the government act with senseless repressive force against writers. I protest, as I am sure most people do who have taken the trouble to make their feelings known on this issue, not in order to make matters worse between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world, but to make them better.

As for the jailing of Greek writers, one inevitably has different feelings because the situation is different. The Greek régime is without legal standing, a military junta whose only purpose was and is to destroy the democratic system of the country. And here, I regret to say, the United States has played a part which no one interested in freedom can overlook. It has chosen to continue shipping arms to the Greek junta, an act which can only strengthen those who have imprisoned these writers.

I believe that we must never cease to impress upon the publicists of the Greek junta that we do not and will not accept their justifications for these jailings, namely, that the writers are Communistic, or socially dangerous in one way or another. Tyrannical acts cannot defend anything worth calling a civilisation.

ONE FINAL NOTE. It is perfectly obvious that a tide is running through the world which was unknown before in our lifetimes. There has never been so great an awareness of the actuality, one might even speak of the holiness, of deeds. The old rationalisations of ideologies, religious convictions, national credos and so forth, no longer serve to console or confuse the hard view of the facts. P.E.N. has always hewed to the fundamental proposition that a repression of writers for whatever reason is an act against civilisation. We have not and do not now mitigate our protests or inflate them because the system of government in any instance of repression is more or less acceptable to us as individuals. Our work is important when it results in alleviating the suffering of writers, but now, I think, the times have proved the rightness of our insistence that a standard of behaviour toward writers must exist and does exist apart from politics. It is a standard which has often seemed simplistic to some and unreal, but the liberty to write and to publish is indeed uncomplicated, and there are more and more people in every country in the world who have come to understand and to insist that whatever the imperatives to coerce and repress, they do not alter the deed and fool fewer and fewer people every week.

Günter Grass:

THIS IS International Human Rights Year, and I hardly think it necessary to say again that it is a writer's responsibility to take part in politics and to help other writers who are in prison for political reasons. But I also think we cannot do this, again and again, in the same, old, nearly hopeless manner—by moral protest, decorated with well-known names, and with the only result that we can say to each other that we have tried to do what is possible. Certainly, we can say that we have this sacred obligation to protest and to protest again; but it is not only a moral question, it is even more a political question. We have to learn from the example given to us by the Czechoslovakian writers during recent months.

I have just returned from Prague, and I saw there the admirable way the Czechoslovakian writers worked together with the students, with one group in the Communist Party, and with other forces in the land. How much they have learnt from the tragic example of the year 1956 in Budapest! and also from the example offered by Poland where things began so hopefully but now, as we see, are going the old Stalinist way. What I saw reminds me of one figure of Czechoslovakian literature—the figure of Schweik—this slow reshaping (and not only by rhetorical protest) of political realities. If we are really trying to help these writers in prison, in the Soviet Union and in Greece, it must not be to fulfil our own good feelings. Writers in Czechoslovakia who were taken to prison some months ago are now free. At the same time in Warsaw the old and well-known Stalinist mentality has had six Polish professors (among them the famous philosopher Leszek Kolakowski) punished and expelled from the University. The Polish idea of a "humane socialism," as formulated by Kolakowski years ago, is now having its success—but in Czechoslovakia.

The old categories of "Communism" and "anti-Communism" simply do not work any more. If one thinks now of writers who are in prison in the Soviet Union and in Greece how can we avoid saying: this kind of system is the same in both places.

Nor is it only a question of writers who are in prison. There are a lot of other people who are living without a P.E.N. club, and who are behind bars. We cannot limit ourselves to professional defence—writers helping writers, farmers helping farmers.

A word about my German point of view—because the history of German literature seems to me to record a long struggle against totalitarianism, against dictatorship. Hasn't the best part of German literature been written in emi-

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gration? And now, as we read in the reports from the Soviet Union, they are playing in Moscow with this incredible idea of deporting young Ginsburg and other writers out of Russia, or forcing them to go abroad. To be sure, it is much better to live in emigration than in prison—but for a writer it remains quite terrible to live for years and years in another country without his language.

If we are to strengthen the position of liberty and culture, we must not confine ourselves to the convenient protest of international name-dropping; we need effective political support—and that means the rallying of more than writers.

Graham Greene:

FORGIVE ME if I don't talk about Greece. I share your feelings about Greece entirely, but I have no personal contacts there as I have had in Russia. I am an admirer of the Soviet Union; I don't appear here as an attacker. I am an admirer of the Soviet Union, and an admirer of the Communist system. But in any government there grows up a hideous Establishment of stupid men. I have slight hopes—because I notice that a distinguished officer of the KGB, in an interview with a Western journalist, criticised the Daniel-Sinyavsky trial. This is my old friend and colleague, Kim Philby.

One of the traces left on the world by Christianity, I think, is a phrase like "There but for the grace of God go I," or in Donne's more literary fashion, "For whom the bell tolls." We can sympathise with a forger, or a blackmailer, or even that man, even that genocide, who drops the bombs on innocent peasants in Viet Nam. What seems to me appallingly absent among these stupid men is a feeling of community. I wrote—if you'll forgive me being personal—I wrote to the Union of Writers in Moscow, asking them to hand over my royalties which are banked there, to the wives of Sinyavsky and Daniel. After about three months I got a cold response that they could not hand over *my* money to anyone but myself. Legal enough, fair enough. But I knew the answer to that, and so I wrote to Mr. Alexander Chakovsky, the editor of the *Literary Gazette*, who is also a member of the Supreme Soviet, and asked him if I took out a deed of attorney at the Russian Embassy in Paris and sent it to him, whether he would draw out my money and hand it to these ladies. I didn't expect a very good response, but I didn't expect really such a reply, smooth as ice. Can I read it to you?

> *"My dear Greene,*
>
> It goes without saying that I remember our encounters quite well, and those are very pleasant memories indeed. There's no need to tell you that I am prepared to comply with any of your requests if it is within my power to do so. I am extremely sorry that in this case I have to start with a refusal. The fact is that we do not see eye to eye with regard to the matter raised in your letter. My attitude towards this matter being what it is, I would not like to be involved in it or get in touch with persons who in one way or another are connected with it. This is the reason why I cannot comply with your request. Please accept my best wishes for the New Year."

One must say that no bell tolls in Mr. Chakovsky's ears: no thought that when we defend others we are defending ourselves. Because, one day, God knows, we shall need to be defended.

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Jon Stallworthy

Auto-da-Fé

October, and I learn
from calendars and trees
to be my age—shed, burn
the scented memories

of summer. Too many
summers weighing me down
with unshed letters She
or She sent me, still done

up in ribbon. Ribbon,
permit me. Do you blush
to recall some permission
granted these fingers? "Hush,"

you whisper, letting slip
a blue-veined load
I lifted to my lip
at seventeen. Aloud

I try out her name: *Ann*—
who brought me to my senses—
first shall be first. Come, fan
my flame with your sentences

not for the first time, but
the last! And now, in order
of appearance, each lot
of letters grows a black border.

Angela, Jacqueline,
Astrid, go through the fire
for me. Their smoke gets in
my eyes as they mount the pyre.

The face in each photograph,
aged in a flash, caves in;
the perfect cheekbones slough
the perfect skin.

Who's that behind her? Ouch!
I burnt my fingers, but
never this much!
I can't put myself out!

Oh no! The letters She
sent back shrivel to hot
air! Our ashes mingle; She
loves me, She loves me not.

Hazel, I burn for you!
my life goes up in flames,
a kiss to end and outdo
all . . .
The shapes of your names

melt in my mouth. Freelance
no longer I take my leave
of you with this last dance.
If you carry my love

in your personal luggage,
more than your ears will burn.
My phoenixes, act your age;
blaze and be reborn.

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Malraux the Myth-maker

By Anthony Hartley

"CE QUI *m'intéresse dans un homme quelconque, c'est la condition humaine; dans un grand homme ce sont les moyens et la nature de sa grandeur; dans un saint le caractère de sa sainteté.*"

These words occur in the introductory section of *Antimémoires*,[1] André Malraux's first literary work since the war, but, even out of context, there could be little doubt as to their author. From them can be deduced a view of the world which excludes autobiography as it is usually understood, excludes even the life of a saint or the formal panegyric of a Renaissance prince, if these are to be taken as conveying anything of the inner nature of their subject. It is this deliberate reaction against the mere memorialist which has dictated the form of *Antimémoires* and given it its title.

Significantly, the next section (the first real one) reproduces a chapter from *Les Noyers de l'Altenburg*, Malraux's unfinished novel, started during the second World War. This mingling of fiction with recollection is striking in itself, but it is the theme of the borrowed chapter which plunges the reader familiar with Malraux's work once more into the atmosphere of the pre-War novels. It is an account of a colloquy of intellectuals held in a country-house in Alsace before 1914. The fact of holding such a meeting at all implies a belief in the possibility of communication between human beings, a belief held passionately by Walter Berger, the inspirer of the "Colloques de l'Altenburg," but, in the course of the evening's debate, this initial presumption is ironically reversed. The last word on the human condition is pronounced by the ethnologist Möllberg (Frobenius?), whose researches and explorations have ended by convincing him that there is no such thing as "man": "*Les hommes n'ont guère en commun que de dormir quand ils dorment sans rêves,—et d'être morts.*" What common factor can there be between a king of Babylon, who sickens with the waning moon, and a modern European? How can there be such a concept as Man?

Thus from the very beginning of *Antimémoires* the theme is introduced that runs through Malraux's novels: the impossibility of effective communication between man and man. Seen in the light of Möllberg's pessimism all attempts at self-revelation are vain. The Jean-Jacques Rousseaus of this world by writing their confessions may succeed in producing a work of art in which men can communicate (and this is another aspect of Malraux's view of man), but they cannot convey to their readers the essence that was Rousseau or the complex of emotions that was Jean-Jacques. What then is the proper subject of what can loosely be called biographical writing? Malraux quotes a phrase from one of his own novels: "*L'homme est ce qu'il fait,*" but almost immediately qualifies it. For attention given to deeds alone could not but emphasise the ineluctable side of history in which events dwarf the men who participate in them and eventually come to be linked in their own less than human chains of causality. It is not so much Austerlitz that interests Malraux as Napoleon at Austerlitz. Between the deed and the doer exists an obscure dialectic from which the writer can distil tragedy and irony. Perken in *La Voie Royale* may begin by wishing to write his name like a scar on the map, but he ends murmuring "*Il n'y a pas de mort. Il n'y a que moi qui vais mourrir.*" This is the solitude of the hero, but it is a solitude which Malraux attributes to all men—an isolation only broken by the feeling of fraternity which some

[1] Gallimard (Paris), to be published later this year by Hamish Hamilton (London) and Holt, Rinehart & Winston (New York).

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religious or political movements succeed in generating or by a shared contemplation of human splendour embodied in the creations of artistic genius. The nocturnal tension of a city in revolt or the spectacle of a work of genius can both provide the occasion for thinking, for a moment, that the barriers are down.

These themes run throughout *Antimémoires*, and it is only in their light that Malraux's selection of subject-matter for narration or meditation becomes comprehensible. In this book he recounts some of his own experiences, but what is important is not so much his capture by the Germans in 1944 or his globe-trotting as a minister of the Fifth Republic as a perception of these events which magnifies them (sometimes ridiculously out of proportion) to the dimensions of a fundamentally dramatic universe. An account of a small riot in French Guiana is suddenly punctuated by the remark that the stems of the palm-trees against the starry sky are like the columns of the temple of Baalbek. A visiting minister's last sight of Mao Tse-tung is accompanied by an image recalling an earlier visit—to a queen-sorceress in the Senegalese province of Casamance. Through such cross-references the immanent magical element in life is enhanced and reality made tenuous to a point where it takes on a Protean capacity for transformation. The night sky over Cayenne is joined to the nocturnal mystery which Malraux has celebrated in the painting of Goya. Mao becomes a potential witchdoctor.

This mythopoeic transmutation of reality has always been the means through which Malraux has achieved his greatest literary effects. It is, of course, in part an inheritance from the romantics—in Malraux's case possibly from the Surrealists who influenced his early writing. The description of the Long March of the Chinese Communists to Yenan, which is one of the finest passages of *Antimémoires*, finds a precedent in Chateaubriand's narration of Napoleon's rise and fall in the third section of *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*. There, too, historical reality is raised to the intensity of myth. There, too, a sense of destiny is exhaled from the printed words. Indeed, the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* provide the closest parallel to *Antimémoires*. There is the same interest in the relationship between the writer and history, the same preference for human communication through the mediation of art or nature, the same taste for the exotic and the same somewhat self-conscious awe in face of the diverse beliefs of men. For anyone who has read Chateaubriand's great work the kinship, if not the descent, of *Antimémoires* is evident.

5

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SUCH A RECOGNITION places Malraux where he belongs: at the tail-end of the French Romantics—modified certainly by Surrealism and the vitalism of Barrès, Péguy or even Gide —but recognisably in a literary tradition which is far from being one of realism. To create a world which should correspond to the real one and, at the same time, be a magical substitute for it, a substitute more "real" than the original —Mallarmé's "glorious falsehoods" opposed to "the nothingness which is reality"—has been the constant aim of French Romanticism from the publication of the *Fleurs du Mal* in 1857 onwards. And much of this ambition is still to be found in Malraux's writing. In *Antimémoires*, as in the novels, the outlines of the narrative seem at times to blur and dissolve, while a poetic breath imparts another dimension to the prose, and the protagonists of the world drama loom symbolically through the obscurity like so many Wagnerian heroes. The sober analytical sense of the traditional French memorialist is replaced by something approaching Rimbaud's mythological intuition of the historical process, of the tribes on the move. In a real sense these are *Antimémoires*, both because the book is so utterly different in style and content from what has usually passed for *mémoires* in French literature (Chateaubriand excepted) and because its most characteristic achievement is the creation of myth rather than the recreation of men and events.

One sign of this is the constant interference between literature and reality. The titles of the main section of the book speak for themselves; four out of five of them are titles of Malraux's own works: *Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, La Tentation de l'Occident, La Voie Royale* and *La Condition Humaine*. The first section itself, as has been mentioned earlier, is a chapter lifted from *Les Noyers de l'Altenburg* and another, shorter episode comes from the same source. The section entitled *La Voie Royale* consists of a dialogue in which Malraux again meets a character from *La Condition Humaine*, the Baron de Clappique, a witty, seedy adventurer who promptly recounts the scenario of a film on the life of David de Mayrena, King of the Sedangs (a *montagnard* tribe in Indo-China) and the original of Malraux's own Perken. Yet another book, *Les Conquérants*, is recalled by a quotation at the beginning of a section: "*La grève générale est décrétée à Canton....*"

Thus *Antimémoires* is a commentary upon its author's literature as well as upon his life. The pre-war novels and also the philosophy of art embodied in *Le Musée Imaginaire* are evoked and enlarged upon here. It is clear from this book how closely Malraux's fiction has been entwined with his own life-pattern or, rather, how the same facility in the creation of myth informs both life and work. How distinct is Colonel Berger of the *Forces françaises de l'intérieur* (FFI) from Garine or Perken? Is the account of the 1940 tank attack straight recollection or an arrangement which falls neatly into the patterns of Malraux's symbolic fiction? It is impossible to say and probably useless to ask. What we have in *Antimémoires* (and we are warned of this from the beginning) is a public image deepening and sharpening lines which were already familiar, but hardly changing the face we had already perceived behind the novels: the face of a lofty adventurer animated by the excitement of revolution or discovery, and, in repose, reflecting a resumed meditation on man's destiny and men's power of creation. Malraux's idea of himself is a noble one, but it gives little away.

THAT TASK HAS BEEN left to his first wife, Clara Malraux, whose *Memoirs*[2] provide a fascinating and indispensable companion-piece to the somewhat Renaissance figure of *Antimémoires*. Apart from its value as a highly perceptive record of French society from before 1914 into the early '20s, the essential virtue of this book is to show what it is like to be dragged at the chariot-wheels of a man of genius. It must, indeed, be one of the best accounts in existence of that inevitably painful experience. Nor is the story told with malice, though there are overtones of intense bitterness. Clara Malraux shared with her husband the bizarre quest for Khmer statues along the Cambodian "Royal road" which ended in their both being stranded in Pnom-Penh and in his being charged with theft by the French department of antiquities in Indo-China. The story is curious enough, but what is still more curious is how near they came to bringing off an adventure which seems in retrospect to have been doomed from the start. Mme Malraux conveys most convincingly the fascination and talent of her husband. The picture which emerges is one of a man endowed with strong willpower and a brilliant gift for simplifying situations, but all too unconscious of reality and especially of that part of reality which consists of the existence of other individuals and their feelings:

> My companion took scarcely any interest in men, those ordinary, everyday, transient beings that struggled as best they could to keep themselves going. What did deserve some attention was the fact that over and above their monotonous lives and almost in spite of themselves they

[2] *Memoirs*. By CLARA MALRAUX. Bodley Head, 30s.

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built up myths; and this called for even more attention if the myths allowed the chosen few a higher degree of proud awareness.

This is a good deal nearer to an intimate revelation of Malraux's character than a reader of *Antimémoires* is likely to get. Yet, perhaps not altogether unexpectedly, the weak side of what remains a very extraordinary book is clearly hinted at in Clara Malraux's justifiable irritation with her companion's "mytho-mania." For there is certainly a sense in which Malraux cheats his readers. The question he poses to them is that of the whole destiny of man on earth, but his response to it is made purely in terms of his own psychological experience. To depict the feelings of a man returning from what appeared certain death in battle and seeing an old peasant (*"Ainsi peut-être, Dieu regarda le premier homme...."*) is a valid piece of emotion recollected in tranquillity, but this type of incident cannot bear the weight of healing mystical significance with which it is invested in Malraux's world. It is not for such moments that most men can live. Their existence is perhaps the stuff of tragic art; it can provide no answer to a questioning of the very idea of Man.

DESPITE the furious action of the novels, despite the sense of historic movement which forms the substance of *Antimémoires*, it would not be unfair to say that Malraux's universe is a static one. On the one side is history personified in great men, transcendent in the silence of the shrine, observed in crisis during the convulsions of war or revolution. On the other is the individual who watches the bubbling of the cauldron and inhales from its vapours the various emotions—irony, pity, awe—which are to be distilled into the accomplished work of art. The historian, Marc Bloch once wrote, is like an ogre: his prey is where he scents human flesh. Malraux's attitude to history also has something cannibalistic about it. His is always a noble and a lofty view, but the loftiness can seem intolerable when the reader emerges from the spell and awakens to a sharper sense of what history really is and what it really costs. Have Indian peasants starved, Chinese Communists died on mountain roads, giant figures of the Buddha been venerated for centuries to provide a writer with the diet of myth he needs to create his "higher degree of proud awareness"? Put like this the question is violently unfair, but that it should come to mind suggests the lack of some human dimension in Mal-

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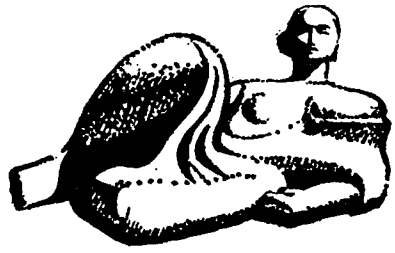

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raux's work—the same blind spot described by Clara Malraux.

Malraux's universe—and *Antimémoires* is a conspectus of it—is tragic, but its tragedy is a permanent state of being rather than a dramatic *dénouement*. The play is concerned with extreme situations, and the players attract the writer's attention at the moment when their actions become exemplary, when they draw their swords or fall on them. Artistically, this is usually an undoubted success: Malraux's works —*Antimémoires* among them—are gripping to read, dazzling in their representation of a sombrely heroic world. As a philosophy of life or letters, however, they are less convincing. Möllberg's conviction of the ultimate disparity of men is hardly refuted by a fraternity felt from pinnacle to pinnacle on the part of lonely heroic figures or by a common communion in art. The Nietzschean element in Malraux's thought is clear, but Zarathustra, after all, came down from the mountains: "See! This cup will become empty again, and Zarathustra will again become human." Malraux is more interested in man's destiny than he is in men, and perhaps his style—in a different application of the phrase from Bagehot's use of it about Macaulay—is not such as "is suitable to such a being as man, in such a world as the present one."

IN THE IMMEDIATE political context this cult of the heroic is translated into the cult of the Great Man. Three of them—Nehru, de Gaulle, and Mao Tse-tung—appear in *Antimémoires*, and they are all treated in the same way: their portraits emphasise the solitude and the mystery of power. "*Nehru était le gourou de la nation.*" De Gaulle "*savait, depuis l'enthousiasme de la Libération, qu'il était l'alibi de millions d'hommes.*" Mao "*m'a fait penser aux empereurs, et il me fait penser maintenant, debout, aux carapaces couvertes de rouille des chefs d'armée qui appartinrent aux allées funéraires des empereurs....*" Behind each conversation with them lies a sector of history of which they are the incarnations and which they (and perhaps they alone) can make real to their interlocutor. They, above all, are the myth-makers, the creators of the magic sought by Malraux in his quest for human achievement. And his success in communicating their myths is one of the fascinations of *Antimémoires*. Nowhere else can one get so strong an impression of what Nehru represented for himself and his people. Nowhere else have I read anything that seemed so convincing an explanation of the policies—of the psychology even—of Mao. In a brilliant eighty pages Malraux sketches what the Chinese Communist revolution was and is. And the lines of his sketch are so strong, the colours so life-like that one feels that it should be read by anyone concerned with the Far East or with foreign affairs.

Indeed it should. Not that it is necessarily "the truth" about Mao and his China. What Malraux has realised is an extraordinarily telling recreation of the myth behind Maoism. Experts may dispute the degree of "truth" that myth contains, but no one can deny that in itself it is certainly a considerable part of the strength of present-day China. Malraux has put Mao's case—the case against the industrialised countries, against Russia as much as against America —better than Mao has put it himself. Behind the myth lie the executions and excommunications, the ruthless tyranny of a fanatic and a country convulsed by the breakdown of the normal processes of government. But the myth itself of an international proletariat knocking on the doors of the rich industrial countries to demand that from each according to his ability should be given to each according to his necessity—this myth is a notably explosive contribution to a world which could do without any more ideological detonations for the time being.

The picture of de Gaulle is more mixed in tone. Here is also a great man, but one fundamentally pessimistic about the results of his historic mission, conscious of the fact that Frenchmen once chose Pétain, that he himself is "the alibi of millions of men" (that Malraux could make such a point is, incidentally, both to his credit and to de Gaulle's). If the tragedy that Malraux perceives in Mao is that of the lonely warrior struggling in his old age against odds which he will not admit to be overwhelming, that of de Gaulle consists in a lucid consciousness of a deluge to come after him and the cynicism of a classical tradition. There is one resemblance though. De Gaulle's distinction between France and (potentially unworthy) individual Frenchmen is paralleled by Mao's suspicions of the youth of China: "*...cette jeunesse présente des tendances dangereuses.... Il est temps de montrer qu'il y en a d' autres....*" Both of them are exemplary figures engaged in some sort of race against time, a struggle to dam the course of history. Their greatness (like that of the heroes of Malraux's novels) is tinged with melancholy. The impermanence that underlies the work of Garine or Perken is already eroding theirs. De Gaulle's consciousness of this element in his destiny makes of him a more attractive, above all a more humane, figure than Mao, but even the Chinese soldier emperor is portrayed in a manner that underlines the transience of his achievements. As in some heroic epic of Greece or Germany the darkness is always creeping

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into the brightly lit hall, while outside chaos waits.

MALRAUX'S view of politics centres on the exemplary role played by tragic heroes who create around them an aura of myth and impose it upon the crowds who follow them. This is a side of politics which, while often mentioned under the heading "charismatic leadership," in fact receives little attention these days. Moreover, there is not much in it of the everyday themes that occupy the attention of most politicians: party intrigue, electoral manoeuvre, diplomatic, social and economic problems. The author of a recent book on Malraux's politics[3] is forced to admit:

> "... there is virtually nothing in Malraux's work that suggests what a well-ordered family or world would look like.... The whole organisational, sexual, recreational, interactional, and instructional (and even economic) areas of life are treated inadequately by Malraux...."

What remains is the creation of myths that move men—for what purpose is left uncertain. Here, indeed, is the weakness. For it is only necessary to read history to see that charismatic national leaders can generate both creative and destructive myths and that men have been swayed by them without much regard for the direction in which they were being led. It is one thing to be aesthetically attracted by the sense of historic destiny that attends this type of communion between the great man and his followers. It is quite another to look upon it as a necessarily desirable phenomenon. The whole history of the 20th century shows that it is not. Malraux himself has always limited his admiration to leaders who have about them something of the statesman, but his method of political appreciation—the judging of a man or a situation by the amount of undifferentiated *mana* that either generates—stresses the violent, irrational side of politics in a way that has obvious dangers. If fraternity—that communication between men for which Malraux seeks to provide a place in his universe—is to be attained at the feet of some demagogue and regardless of his message's content, what is it worth? Is it not indeed a type of psychological stimulus to be avoided? Would it not be better for individual human beings to accept the fact of their loneliness rather than rush to merge themselves promiscuously with the crowd or the mob?

Self-doubt and self-depreciation on the part

[3] *Malraux: an essay in political criticism.* By DAVID WILKINSON. Harvard, $5.95.

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of the hero are presumably the safeguards. Malraux has his reserves about Mao as the tone of his description of the Maoist ideal of "a country dedicated to vengeance and justice" shows. But his imagination is struck by the extraordinary audacity of the attempt—by that and by Asia. It is clear that his thinking about politics and society has been deeply affected by his Asian experience. The charismatic, quasi-religious style of leadership, the communion between the masses and a revered father-figure, the irrational appeal that moves nations, the myth-making and the sense of a destiny transcending the individual—all these stem from beyond the carefully developed rationalism and emphasis on individual rights of modern Western industrial society. Like Gobineau, Malraux has learnt a style of politics from the East. Within this style and at the height of its intensity there is little room for dissent, little room for differentiation between men, little room even for moral categories. This is history in the strong sense of the word—seen as destiny. And it is also politics in the strong sense—seen as a mass consent to requirements that go far beyond the normal obedience to an existing state. Myth demands participation at every level of life. This may be called cultural politics, but where the state is identified with a country's culture it becomes more total in its demands and not necessarily more humane in its nature. When the spell of the myth is broken it will be broken utterly. Meanwhile, all must join in the dance of the national shaman or the meditation of the national guru. From such an accord may come movement in countries sunk in lethargy and which, lacking the very possibility of government through a regular administration, are thrown back on the mass action excited by a magical appeal.

IT IS SOMETHING of a paradox that these collective forces should be evoked by an individual, heroic though he may be. But the appeal of this spectacle for Malraux lies precisely in the contrast between the fallible, suffering hero and the great consequences brought about by his apotheosis. The essence of romanticism consists in a human spirit regarding with exultation the flow of events and imparting to them the significance through which they acquire the quality of destiny. Such a process of assimilation and direction can be the inspiration of a writer. It can also be the reward of a leader who incarnates the national myth. Malraux's own romanticism finds its equivalent in the task performed by the great men by whom he is so visibly fascinated. His relationship to them is the same as theirs to their peoples. As they read destiny into the history of the nations they govern, so he reads destiny into their acts of government. Artist and ruler are the same, bent over the same work. Both are creators of meaning within the anarchic flow of history. Both are intensifiers of average human experience to a point where communication between men may become possible.

Thus *Antimémoires* is at the point of intersection of two aspects of Malraux himself. Not only is he present as the artist imparting meaning to events, but he himself plays the role of leader directing history. The somewhat inflated emphasis placed on a minor tour round the Caribbean by a minister of the Fifth Republic no doubt stems from the confrontation it contains between Malraux the leader and Malraux the artist, and to the undue excitement felt by the latter at the spectacle of the former. Malraux the writer attaches too much importance to the doings of Malraux the minister. A riot at Cayenne is no substitute for revolutionary Canton or the Finland Station, and the dismissal of a prefect detected in inefficiency and the possession of an (American) Cadillac is a petty day of dupes. The French Guiana episode is certainly a blemish on the book, and there are others.

Yet *Antimémoires* is still the work of a great writer and a man of intellectual quality who has not been deluded by his imaginative gifts into concealment of his own innate contradictions. The view of life contained in it has its defects—including the major one that it is unliveable for the majority of men—but it remains a lofty hypothesis on which to build creation. Orwell has written that men are incurably heroic. It is that side of them which appeals to Malraux, and his picture of them contains no denigration of human possibilities. Rather it proclaims a noble stoicism which all are summoned to practise regardless of whether their lungs allow them to breathe such rarefied air. The failure comes when the incorrigible Sancho Panza in each of us refuses to see the giants of historical destiny and insists that not only are they the windmills of everyday life, but that they are better so. Then indeed communication breaks down, and myth-making is at an end. As literature *Antimémoires* runs an undoubted risk—the risk of a total failure. Yet, for one critic at least, it is a moving book (at times intensely moving) and one not unworthy of its author. That it should call into question Malraux's literary method and philosophy of life is some indication of the place it occupies in his work.

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Before the Flood

On Hugh Seton-Watson's "Russian Empire" — By MAX BELOFF

BETWEEN OURSELVES and the reality of pre-Revolutionary Russia there exists the barrier of the Revolution itself. In the intervening half-century much has been written to explain its coming, and most of the historical writing about the preceding century has been devoted to an attempt to explain it. Furthermore although much documentation has been produced at various times during the Soviet period, historians have perforce been influenced by both the self-exculpatory memoirs of exiles and the hagiography of Soviet writers. It is only with distance that it becomes possible to see clearly and to describe without passion an important era in the history of an important section of the human race.

Professor Seton-Watson has worked long and conscientiously to provide for the English-reading public a full-scale narrative of Russian history between the accession of Alexander I and the abdication of Nicholas II.[1] It is designed on comprehensive lines and makes few concessions to those more interested in opinion than in facts. Economic life is dealt with in statistical detail; changing administrative structures are painstakingly analysed; diplomatic relations set out in such detail that occasionally they go rather beyond what the historian of Russia as such might need; military campaigns are not ignored. A particular strength of the book lies in its full and on the whole sympathetic treatment of the non-Russian minorities—we are never allowed to forget that it is an empire we are dealing with.[2] Although due attention is paid to the contribution to the story of notable individuals, full personal portraits are rarely attempted; anecdotes are kept to the minimum; the tone is austere and scholarly; the author's own judgments and interpretations are largely reserved for a brief epilogue. Yet Professor Seton-Watson has a point of view and it is both personal and typical of the present moment with our obsession with "development" and "modernisation."

Previous historians have approached Russia with the yardstick of the West or of some idealised vision of Slavdom. Professor Seton-Watson is familiar with the new worlds of Asia, Africa and Latin America where the Russian experience is being lived through again in part and where the Russian example is part of the mental background of many leading figures. Not many people have the capacity to look at Russia from this point of view, and fewer have the detailed knowledge to make much of this approach. It is one of Professor Seton-Watson's strengths that he knows a good deal about Japan and we are often asked to contemplate the successes of Japan (for instance, in agriculture and in the diffusion of education) with the failures of Imperial Russia. The comparison is both apt and illuminating. Such assets make up for what is perhaps a weakness in Professor Seton-Watson's equipment for his task, namely the fact that he clearly finds the subject as such unattractive. He admits to the glories of Russian achievements in literature and the arts, and to the devotion and self-sacrifice of men on both sides of the political divide; but fundamentally it is clear that Professor Seton-Watson finds Russia and the Russians unsympathetic. He is no Russophobe but he is no Russophile either.

In part this may be the inevitable reaction of a Western scholar whose professional interests oblige him to take cognisance of the Soviet régime which controls the sources upon which he would wish to work, and the writings and contacts of the Russian scholars with whom he would wish to collaborate. A government capable of bottomless mendacity, and historians who have no choice but to bend to its directives —these are unlikely to stimulate warm feelings among foreign intellectuals. It must be hard to give adequate expression to the denial of individual freedoms by Tsarist governments and yet retain clearly in one's mind the fact that for most of the period, and especially in its final years, Tsarism was in the sense of limitations placed upon intellectual and cultural pursuits almost infinitely "liberal" compared not merely

[1] Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire 1801–1917*. Clarendon Press: O.U.P., 55s.

[2] Perhaps I may be pardoned for the comment that neither the text nor the ample bibliography pays enough attention to Russian Jewry, which was not simply the victim of pogroms.

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with Stalinist Russia but even with the Russia of the "thaw."

Because Professor Seton-Watson deliberately breaks off his narrative at the February Revolution, one may inadvertently overlook what seems to me the most striking feature of the book, namely its contribution towards understanding what came afterwards. The Revolution, the Civil War and collectivisation—events which like those of the Tsarist era itself already belong to the historical past—seem more and more to resemble a mighty flood. As the waters recede, much destruction is visible, some rivers even have changed their course, but the great landmarks remain.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS of modern Russian history as Professor Seton-Watson teaches us to see them? First of all, the fact that modernisation and development were imposed from above and did not for the most part, as in the West, develop from the autonomous action and private strivings of social groups or individual leaders of them. Peter the Great made so rapid and successful a beginning that by the end of the eighteenth century the gap between Russia and the West was much lower than it had been. During and after the Napoleonic wars Russia was as "European" as she has ever been. Then with the freezing of social advance and intellectual development after the failure of the Decembrists—the last Russians in whom Professor Seton-Watson sees some hope of development along Western lines—the gap widens again. Another movement to catch up is precipitated by the defeat in the Crimea—but the era of reforms is stultified by its bureaucratic and non-popular character and renewed reaction follows. In the final decades of the Empire, important progress is made on the economic front; but the unwillingness of the régime to allow this to have its natural consequences in the spreading of social and political responsibilities even among the loyal, together with the relentless policy of Russification of the subject peoples —even when like the Finns or Armenians they had no other reason to be anti-Russian—render this progress inadequate to stand the strains of large-scale war and catastrophic loss.

In the second place, just because modernisation and development came from above its incidence was unequal. Industry went ahead—with foreign capital to help—while agriculture languished. The peasant problem remained the Achilles heel of the régime, and the peasants in uniform who were the soldiers in the mutinies in the capital in February 1917 were the essential element in the fall of the régime.

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In the third place, because of the fears of the monarchy and its servants, the development of education was deliberately stultified so far as the masses were concerned. The resulting gap between the intelligentsia and the masses explains both the impossibility of a gradual and constitutional approach to modifying the régime and the particular nature of the revolutionary movements themselves. It is because of the nature of educational development as well as because of the lop-sided economic structure that Russia did not develop a true bourgeoisie, and without a bourgeoisie there could be no liberalism. An intelligentsia is not a substitute. The educational reforms of the final decade of Tsardom were again too late.

Finally, and most significant of all, for reasons that take one away back beyond 1801 to the very origins of the Russian state—religious as well as secular—the Russians had no deep sense for the importance to any but the most primitive of societies of the idea of law and of legal and constitutional processes. The autocracy and its servants—even those with some genuinely progressive and intelligent ideas like Stolypin—could never allow themselves to be bound by constitutional requirements, not even by those of their own devising. But the opposition also was much more influenced by ideas of translating the general will into action than by the Western view of the State as holding a balance between conflicting but legitimate interests. Again, there was in the Russian intelligentsia a commitment to equality so extreme that absolutism itself was generally preferred to any kind of oligarchy—and it is hard to see how in a developing society there can be any progress towards democracy without an oligarchic stage such as every successful Western society has known at one time or another.

It is of course much more difficult to write about the history of the Soviet period than about its predecessor; the materials are lacking to a much greater degree. Thus Professor Seton-Watson can show how within a bureaucratic régime like that of Tsardom, individual ministries may come to stand for different policies and the interests of different social groups that have no more public forum for pressing their views. It is obvious that much could be written in terms of the different outlooks of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Interior; and it may be that one day one will be able to make some progress towards understanding Soviet (or even contemporary Chinese) history in these terms. But what is clear is that all the main distinguishing features of Tsardom survive often in an exaggerated form to characterise its successor. We have had fifty more years of development and modernisation "from above"—with political and military rather than welfare considerations as the dominant ones. We have had the same preference for industry over agriculture, and the same consequential exploitation of the peasant. Russification has not ceased to be the ideal even if it is a secular rather than a revealed religion that is to provide its content.

There is one important difference—the general acceptance of the need for a much more equal access to education at all levels. Thus the Soviet régime has carried out what was inherent in the policies of the final years of Tsardom; though we clearly can never know whether the process would have been allowed to work itself out. The gap between an educated élite and the masses which Professor Seton-Watson sees as the main weakness of all developing societies is largely absent from the Soviet scene. But for this achievement a high price has been paid; not only is there no bourgeoisie to carry the seeds of liberalism, there is not even an intelligentsia, except in the official Soviet mythology. For an intelligentsia cannot function if its livelihood and means of expression are wholly within the control of the State. The price of equality has been enforced uniformity and the price in human terms—perhaps in social terms—is high as well.

A book with so much work and thought packed into it will answer different questions for different people. It has answered a personal one for me. Between the wars I knew in London an elderly and scholarly gentleman, one Jacob Schapiro, a Jew from the Baltic provinces, who had been a member of the Second Duma. He devoted his exile to assembling and studying a library of English history and literature with a strong concentration on the seventeenth century and its constitutional problems. (Many of his books which I ultimately acquired line the room I write in.) I used to wonder vaguely why a Russian should be so interested in this

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particular period of the history of a foreign country, but I was too young and shy ever to inquire. I now realise that the reason must have been precisely that which underlies Professor Seton-Watson's treatment of his theme. It was just this element—the serious and earnest examination of points of legal and constitutional development, a serious concern over individual liberties and the means for safeguarding them—that was lacking on both sides of the great conflict between Tsardom and the Revolution. This concern has been a central element—the central element—in English history. It may explain why an earlier and more famous Russian constitutionalist Paul Vinogradov spent his years of exile on studying even earlier periods of English history. What would have distressed both Vinogradov and Jacob Schapiro would have been to see how little we seem to care about such things in England—how the cruder concepts of egalitarianism and statism have become the fashionable thing among our own intelligentsia. It is all very fine to make fun of the Whig interpretation of history—it was having no Whigs that was Russia's essential tragedy.

Frenglish

Oak-laird earl, a leaner moaner—ah, me P.R.O.—
Prayer-term (what a plea: "M' poor achel"): rear and mow,
Mash and allay mortar. Journey? Plead a fear
Over 'em. What a port: a poor lamb-ordered year.

THIS CURIOUS DREAM-POEM does not yield easily to analysis, but it is evident that something is going on. A nobleman who, like Charles I, has been hiding from his enemies in an oak-tree, has become the public relations officer of a somewhat unsympathetic tycoon. This nobleman complains of emaciation and rheumatism, both natural consequences of privation, but he is made to grovel, perform tricks, and do rough labourer's work; at the same time, his patrician mode of speech is mocked. When he asks if he may take a short trip, he is sarcastically told that, if he aches too much to work, he ought really to fear the discomforts of a journey. The tycoon indifferently dismisses his request while he is tasting a new consignment of port. The port was laid down in a bad year —one of those known in the wine-trade as

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"lamb-ordered," meaning that the Lusitanian summer was spoilt by an excess of fleecy clouds.

For rarer Jack a fairer Jack.
Adore May viewed, or May-view.
Son'll aim at Ena's son (a lame art, Ena).
Darn, darn, Don. Darned and on!

Much more cryptic. Very well, not cryptic then. Preposterous. A kind of English that will only make sense to a Frenchman, and only if sung rapidly from the next room. A waste of everybody's time, especially in a stern year of devaluation and buckling to and being a proud nation. But the poems in *Mots D'Heures: Gousses, Rames*[1] (of which mine are a counterpart) come from a country where there is no guilt at fiddling instead of keeping the fire of the Gross National Product crackling away. Luis D'Antin van Rooten is an actor and, as I seem to remember from the film *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes*, a very intelligent one. Obtaining serious aesthetic satisfaction from this main vocation, he can afford to amuse himself with mandarin macaronics.

[1] *Mots d'Heures: Gousses, Rames.* By Luis D'Antin van Rooten (New York, Grossman, $3.95: London, Angus & Robertson, 15s).

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Take the title first. *Mots D'Heures*—"Words of the Hours"—claims to be a "more poetic title than the more familiar 'Book of Hours'. A religious or philosophic background is tacitly indicated by this title." Then comes *Gousses, Rames*: "a *gousse* is a clove or section, as in the bulb of the garlic plant. We can therefore assume that this implies 'Root and Branch', or a complete unity." Actually, *Gousse* means what it sounds like—bones, beak and all. The trick suggests a film on the making of a salad dressing run backwards: the oil of semantics is separated from the phonetic vinegar. Knowing the trick, we can understand the following, which is more than a monoglot Frenchman can do:

Un petit d'un petit
S'étonne aux Halles
Un petit d'un petit
Ah! degrés te fallent
Indolent qui ne sort cesse
Indolent qui ne se mène
Qu'importe un petit d'un petit
Tout Gai de Reguennes.

This rhyme, and all the others, are supposed to be contained in the D'Antin Manuscripts, part of the personal effects of François Charles Fernand D'Antin handed down to Mr. van Rooten as sole surviving relative of the deceased. The other effects were pathetically meagre (they included some post-card views of Naples and Pompeii and a prescription for falling hair). "All these," says Mr. van Rooten, "I consigned to the eternal discretion of my fireplace." That is a very Nabokovian locution, and there is something Nabokovian about this gust for word-puzzles and tortuous glosses. Mr. van Rooten has, I think, been much impressed by *Pale Fire*. His note on the first line of the above is: "The inevitable result of a child marriage." As for Gai de Reguennes, he was "a young squire (to one of his uncles, a Gaillard of Normandy) who died at the tender age of twelve of a surfeit of Saracen arrows before the walls of Acre in 1191."

Now try this:

Chacun Gille
Houer ne taupe de hile
Tôt-fait, j'appelle au boiteur
Chaque fêle dans un broc, est-ce crosne?
Un Gille qu'aime tant berline à fétard.

Gille is a sort of rustic clown in medieval plays, though the last line affirms that "he loves a life of pleasure and a carriage." *Est-ce crosne?* seems to mean "Is it a Chinese cabbage?", and this must refer to the uncovering of a mole and part of a seed in the second line. And so on, including "Quickly finished, I call to the limping man

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that every pitcher has a crack in it." There is a nice religious analogy here if anyone wants it—the accidents and essence of a sacrament being qualitatively different things, so *Reine, reine, gueux éveille* ("Queen, Queen, arouse the rabble") is the semantic accident behind which "Rain, rain, go away" is administered.

THERE ARE FORTY of these Fabergé toys, and this must seem too much for anyone to play with. It's a long time since a man of culture revelled so wholeheartedly in something so useless, but the tradition, though nearly lost, is highly civilised. Swift loved macaronics:

Mollis abuti
Has an acuti.
No lasso finis
Molli divinis.

Max Beerbohm, the last of the playboys of literature, wasted his time in a different way, though one of which Mr. van Rooten must approve. He got advance copies of that dreadful poem *Apollo and the Seamen*, cut out all the aitches with a fine knife and substituted exquisitely inked apostrophes, so that one rich-sounding line became

'E raised 'is 'ead to the 'eavens 'igh.

These copies were, I believe, then sent to reviewers. The author, whose name I forget but who was certainly poet laureate then or later, was not amused. There are plenty of earnest littérateurs who will not be amused by *Mots D'Heures: Gousses, Rames*. There's a lot of stodginess about still.

And yet a concern with the mystery of words —serious with Nabokov, not so much with van Rooten—can be, however denounced as pedantic, pococurantist or quirky, a means of revivifying literature. I am all for George-Herbert-type poems about the double significance of J and C, sonnets whose lines are single anapaests, acrostics, monstrous baroque conceits, riddles like the Anglo-Saxon ones, grossness disguised as decency and *vice versa*. When politicians debase language, it is up to the writers to restore its dignity. This means cleaning words and then polishing them. But a clean and polished tool may be admired (before it is put back to use) as a *res mirabilis* in itself. Or, as here, the all too familiar can be made to look strange and new through the prism of another language. The macaronic dilettantes and crossword compilers are nearer the heart of language than they probably know.

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PRESS

At the French Kiosk

By Richard Mayne

BRITONS AND AMERICANS have breakfast: Frenchmen have newspaper kiosks. Coffee and *croissants*, that is, allow less time for reading than orange juice, kippers, and toast with chunky marmalade; and French law discourages children's delivering newspapers before school. So although many regular readers, especially in the provinces, take out subscriptions and get their papers by mail, the Frenchman's common habit is to buy them on the way to work and back. Instead of the tobacconist-sweetshop-newsagent on the corner, France has separate establishments. The *tabac* sells tobacco and postage stamps; the confectioner's tends to be a *de luxe* emporium with minuscule boxes of expensive, unsweet, and rather plain chocolates; and the newsagent—often the widow of a minor state functionary—shivers through long hours in one of those draughty street kiosks that figure in the tourist image alongside berets, white-sticked policemen, advertisement pillars, and fragrant little old-world urinals.

The newspapers at the typical Paris kiosk at first sight seem to resemble their counterparts in England or America. *Le Figaro* seems roughly to correspond to *The Daily Telegraph* or the old *Herald Tribune*. *Le Monde*, although an afternoon paper, has sober affinities with *The Times* of London or New York. *Le Parisien Libéré*, most widely read of the Paris morning papers, in some ways recalls the British *Daily Express* or *Daily Mail*. The tabloid *Paris-Jour* looks a little like the London *Daily Mirror* or the New York *Daily News*.

But behind these casual resemblances the differences are many. Some, it's true, are fairly obvious idiosyncrasies of format and layout. *Le Figaro* carries only the headlines of the main news on its front page, together with independent commentaries, a cartoon, a photograph, and sometimes a rare editorial: the stories themselves are found inside. *Le Monde*, in a miniformat only slightly bigger than that imposed on it by the post-war paper shortage, prints no pictures except in the advertisements—and has boasted to advertisers that the contrast makes their wares stand out. The French popular press uses photographs—and headlines—as big as in any of its foreign counterparts except, perhaps, the German *Bild Zeitung*: usually, they're devoted to personal tragedies whose victims become briefly famous under their first names as "*le petit Luc*" or "*la pauvre Mado*," like members of the British royal family. In more serious papers, the *faits divers* of crime and accidents are normally segregated on a special page; and although most other stories are displayed according to their relative news value, these also tend to be grouped, more systematically than in the English-language press, under such separate headings as "Africa," "the Middle East," "Europe & the Atlantic Alliance," "Political News," "Economic Life," and so on.

DESPITE THIS, TO AN OUTSIDER most French newspapers still look something of a muddle, with thick horizontal lines to emphasise headings, bizarre contrasts of typeface, and much use of rather fevered "flash" techniques, imitating sky-signs by printing legends like "BREF — EN BREF — EN BREF — EN BREF — EN BREF — EN" across the page. With virtually no regular correspondence columns, a letter to the editor may crop up anywhere—or nowhere: so may a small advertisement or an official announcement. One French friend of mine, a *Figaro* reader, complains that he never knows where to look for anything; and *Le Monde*, notoriously, is as much a sea of forbidding grey intelligence as the feature pages of the *Guardian* or the news pages of the New York *Times*. *Le Monde* also shares with the American press the irritating habit of beginning too many lengthy stories on the front page, and continuing each of them on a different page inside—so that assiduous readers, folding their way back and forth through the labyrinth, soon develop accordion-player's cramp.

What distinguishes French newspapers more fundamentally, however, is the relative smallness of their circulations. No nation reads more papers than the British—50·6 copies for every hundred people, according to UNESCO figures. Next to the British come the Swedes, with 46·2 copies, followed rather oddly by the East Germans (45·6) and the Icelanders (45)—although their annual consumption of newsprint per person amounts to only 4·4 and 9·7 kilograms respectively, against Britain's 25. Americans, understandably, account for 36·6 kilograms of newsprint per person every year: but equally understandably, they get through fewer papers —32·6 for every hundred people. The French lag well behind in this race for information, taking eighteenth place, outdistanced by Bermuda and the Ryukyu Islands, and only just beating Czechoslovakia and Uruguay. Annual newsprint consumption per head in France is 10·4 kilograms, and the number of copies of daily papers for every hundred people is only 27. Asked in a recent marketing survey about their leisure activities, a mere 76 per cent of Frenchmen admitted to reading a newspaper more than

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twice a week, compared with 93 per cent in Great Britain; and when another inquiry discovered that Paris morning papers sold best on a Thursday, the discomfiting reason turned out to be that this was when they printed the lottery results. The French, in other words, are less press-addicted than either the British or the Americans: they can take it or leave it alone. In this sense their casual after-breakfast buying habit seems characteristic; and since the papers go to the kiosks for "sale or return," it adds an extra touch of uncertainty to French newspaper finance.

OF PARIS' ten non-specialised dailies, only one sells more than a million copies, and only one other more than half-a-million. The smallest of all sells 59,000—fewer than Britain's Communist daily. In descending order of circulation (not of the total number printed), the ten are as follows:

FRANCE-SOIR (*evening*; *1,050,000*). Descended from the wartime Resistance newspaper *Défense de la France*—which was briefly visible in the film *Is Paris Burning?*—this is now essentially a popular evening paper on the British or American pattern. It puts out six editions daily, beginning before lunch, and its first provincial edition goes to bed at 4 a.m. Amid its abundant *faits divers*, some readers may not notice a particular political line; but its director-general, Pierre Lazareff, now and then signs a pro-Gaullist editorial.

LE PARISIEN LIBÉRÉ (*morning*; *774,000*). Also of Resistance origin, this is in part the child of *Les Cahiers de l'O.C.M.* (*l'Organisation Civile et Militaire*); but today's paper is a successful popular jumble of bits for all the family. Its front page looks like an overcrowded billboard. Inside, cheek by heavy jowl with occasional statesmen's memoirs, there are brief political reports, crime stories, sport, ample horoscopes, and photographic or strip-cartoon versions of historical and other romances, complete with "balloons" of bewigged sub-Dumas dialogue. It now puts out a tabloid edition too.

LE FIGARO (*morning*; *500,000*). First founded in 1826 as a literary weekly, this became a daily in 1866. Its contributors have included Zola, Maupassant, Mallarmé, Anatole France, and Proust; and its much respected director, Pierre Brisson, who died in 1964 but who still has his name on the front page, himself began as the paper's literary editor. Under the Occupation, Brisson continued to produce *Le Figaro* in Lyon, but closed it down in 1942; in August 1944 he brought it out again in Paris. When last November it celebrated its centenary, one commentator quoted *The Barber of Seville*: "*Ah, bravo Figaro,/Bravo, bravissimo,/A te fortuna non mancherà!*"—a sly allusion to the paper's $26-million gross annual revenue and solid bourgeois readership. But if *Le Figaro* today seems a long way from Zola, and tends to support the government at elections, it still expresses cautious concern over some Gaullist foreign policies, and it regularly publishes such independent commentators as Raymond Aron and André François-Poncet. It now plans a Sunday edition, to be partly financed by Hachette.

L'AURORE (*morning*; *333,000*). A further child of the Resistance, this owes its title to the paper in which Clemenceau published Zola's "*J'accuse.*" Less bitty than *Le Parisien Libéré* but in some ways similar, it's been called—unfairly—"the small shopkeeper's *Figaro*": to balance its *faits divers* it offers dissertations by Jules Romains (*de l'Académie Française*). But despite its rather narrow conservatism, its director, the late Robert Lazurick, sometimes printed pungent and surprisingly anti-chauvinist editorials.

LE MONDE (*evening*; *251,000*). Like many respectable matrons, *Le Monde* has a stormy past. Founded in December 1944, some months after most of its rivals had appeared or re-emerged, it took over the presses, the sober appearance, and—at first—the format of the pre-war *Le Temps*. But its contents were rather different. During the Indo-Chinese and Algerian wars, its director Hubert Beuve-Méry fought prodigious and victorious battles, not only against rich right-wing competitors launched for the sole purpose of sinking him, but also within the parent publishing company itself. Over the years, the paper's political position has shifted from something like third-force neutralism—decried as "crypto-Communism" by its enemies—to more orthodox European and Atlantic policies. But nowadays, except when Beuve-Méry himself writes its editorials, over the pseudonym "Sirius," *Le Monde*'s political views too often seem hard to focus through its oblique and allusive—and sometimes chauvinist—prose.

PARIS-JOUR (*morning*; *245,000*). France's first tabloid, this is a very remote descendant of the Resistance *Franc-Tireur*, whose peacetime successor was brought out in 1957 by the late Cino Del Duca, the Italian-born entrepreneur known in France as "the Napoleon of the heart-throb press." For a while it appeared as *Paris-Journal*, before adopting its present title and format, under which its sales are growing.

L'HUMANITÉ (*morning*; *149,000*). A survivor from the old French tradition of party-political papers (*journaux politiques*) as distinct from newspapers (*journaux d'information*), France's

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Communist daily was founded by Jean Jaurès in 1904. Rather equivocally, it became the first of France's undercover World War II newspapers when it was banned in 1939 as a result of the Nazi-Soviet Pact; and its political line remained understandably tortuous until Hitler invaded Russia two years later. Today, Gaullist policy *vis-à-vis* Moscow and Washington produces comparable acrobatics in the paper's editorials; but whatever its embarrassments it far excels its British or American counterparts, and more closely resembles the Italian *L'Unità*.

LA CROIX (*evening*; *118,000*). Beginning as a pious monthly in 1880, this has been a daily paper since 1883. "La Bonne Presse," the Catholic group that owns it, now issues 20 publications with a total circulation of 80 million; and 100,000 of *La Croix*'s own readers have subscriptions. Despite this doubly faithful readership, the paper tries hard to compete with its secular rivals, and is proud of having printed, in November 1904, the first photograph to appear in a French newspaper. Its economic and Common Market coverage is exceptionally good.

COMBAT (*morning*; *65,000*). Austere and diminutive, this is the Paris daily that most recalls its Resistance origins of 1941. At various times in the war and the Liberation, its staff included Georges Bidault, Pierre-Henri Teitgen, Claude Bourdet, and Albert Camus. Later, the post-war team gradually departed, and a majority holding in the company was bought by Henry Smadja, a French businessman whose interests in Tunisia include the prosperous daily *La Presse*. Today, *Combat*'s small readership is mainly Parisian, intellectual, and left-wing—a fact said to explain the French Government's slowness to protest when the Tunis authorities recently held the 70-year-old M. Smadja incommunicado for allegedly smuggling money out to keep *Combat* alive.

PARIS-PRESSE (*evening*; *59,000*). Founded in 1944, this at first prospered as a deliberately "Parisian" paper, enlivened by metropolitan news and rumour. In the last four years or so, its circulation's dropped by nearly two-thirds; and in June 1965, by a process of semi-amalgamation, it shrank to little more than a title and a few covering pages for two extra editions of its huge stable-companion, *France-Soir*.

ONE'S FIRST impression is that these circulation figures, like the new franc, must conceal some missing noughts. But no: there's nothing in France to rival the daily giants of Japan, Soviet Russia, or Britain—and only one French daily equals the figure at which the British *News Chronicle* actually expired. The French public's reading habits may be one explanation; but more important is its geographical dispersion.

Outwardly, the French press looks more centralised than most of its counterparts in continental Europe. Germany has only two dailies of real national importance, neither published from the capital; in Italy, likewise, the two most outstanding newspapers come from elsewhere than Rome. Yet in fact the Paris press itself is as much regional as national. Even *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, and *France-Soir*, with their comparatively widespread distribution, make more than half their sales in Paris; while a full two-thirds of all French newspapers are sold elsewhere. The gap, of course, is filled by France's vast and impressive provincial press, more than ninety papers strong. Several of these —like *Le Progrès de Lyon*, founded in 1859— are older than most of their Parisian counterparts; some—like *Ouest-France*, which sells 600,000 copies—have bigger circulations. One secret of their success is France's relatively large area; another is the multiplicity of their special local editions, which give the new giant *Province No. 1*, once *Le Dauphiné Libéré*, sales of a million-plus. In 1960, Paris itself began to follow suit, with regional editions of *Le Parisien Libéré* for the area north of the capital in the department of the Oise. Many French newspapers, therefore, are in some sense village papers, with local news and local cinema programmes; and some of the Paris press is no exception.

One mark of this is the largely local character of its display advertisements, for stores as much as for products—an affinity with America rather than Britain. Some have suggested that this may expose the papers to pressure from local advertisers; but what evidence there is seems reassuring. Even the Communist *L'Humanité*, which might be supposed to suffer from a bourgeois boycott, carries "capitalist" advertisements, including some from within the German Federal Republic; its more successful Sunday version has an advertising revenue said to total 600,000 francs a month. Altogether, advertisements represent between a half and three-quarters of the most prosperous French papers' turnover; but expenditure per head on press advertising in France is still only a sixth of the American figure, and only a half of the British.

With circulations relatively small and local, and advertising revenue comparatively limited, further funds must come from somewhere; and one indirect source of help is the state. Piecemeal over many years, a large number of subsidies has accumulated. Investments are encouraged, as in other industries, by tax concessions on revenue set aside for new plant;

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and fifteen per cent of investment capital is reimbursed. The press is exempt from trade licence fees and from part of the turnover tax; it enjoys special cable, travel, and telephone rates, special postal charges for newspapers mailed to subscribers, and special rail and air freight rebates for newspapers shipped in bulk. Some papers sent abroad—to French-speaking Canada, for instance—are aided by the Overseas Cultural Fund as part of its *mission civilisatrice*. The national news agency *Agence France Presse*, although independent of government control, earns some 39 million francs a year from the government departments that take its service; and finally—partly to protect French paper mills—the government subsidises newsprint to the tune of $5 million a year. The total of state aid, direct and indirect, has been unofficially estimated at an annual $60 million.

SOME OF THESE PRIVILEGES date from the Liberation, when French journalists and statesmen alike were anxious to rescue the press from the twin taints of war-time collaboration and pre-war venality. The assets of the collaborationist press were seized and partly handed over to its successors. A series of laws was drawn up to protect newpapers from the anonymous power of big business and high finance; they were required, among other things, to print on the front page under the title-piece the names of their directors and owners—a precept followed today, incompletely, by only four of the Paris dailies. For a time, aided by subsidies and also, paradoxically, by paper rationing, small new ventures proliferated. From 12 million in 1945, the total circulation of the French press rose to a record 15 million in June 1946, when there were as many as 28 newspapers in Paris and 175 in the provinces.

BUT THE POST-WAR honeymoon was too good to last. Gradually, by fits and starts, France's total newspaper circulation fell to its present figure of 11½ million. One by one, many of the smaller papers died or were absorbed by their competitors. The most recent casualties in Paris have included the extreme left-wing *Libération*, killed in November 1964, when the Communist Party cut off its subsidy, and *Paris-Presse*, kept half-alive in its present form allegedly to ward off any challenge to its big brother (and Siamese twin) *France-Soir*. More lately still, there's been talk of financial problems for *L'Aurore*, *Le Parisien Libéré*, the superlative sports daily *L'Equipe*, and even the illustrated *Paris-Match*. The process of concentration has been especially marked in the provinces, which only since the war have begun to absorb the greater part of French sales. Many provincial cities now have only one newspaper; and even Marseilles, which before the war boasted seven, is now reduced to four. The first moves towards the merger that at length produced *Province No. 1* brought a protest from the French journalists' association; but despite the hopes once cherished at the Liberation, economic pressure has already led to the reappearance of substantial newspaper combines. As yet, these hardly rival their British and Commonwealth counterparts: but some of them are formidable enough. Of the fifteen to twenty main groupings, seven in particular stand out—Hachette, Prouvost, Amaury, Boussac, Hersant, Del Duca, and Floirat-Filipacchi.

HACHETTE, the printer, publisher, and distributor of both books and newspapers, backed by the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, controls *France-Soir*, *Paris-Presse*, and one of France's so far rare Sunday newspapers, the flimsy *Journal du Dimanche*. In the weekly field, it owns among many others *Entreprise* (the would-be French *Fortune*), the stylish women's magazine *Elle*, and *Le Journal de Mickey* (Mouse).

JEAN PROUVOST, the octogenarian wool magnate, first made his mark in newspapers with the pre-war *Paris-Soir*, whose brash popular journalism shocked much of the staid 1930s French press. In sometimes uneasy partnership with his brother-in-law Ferdinand Béghin, the sugar refiner, Prouvost now controls the parent company of *Le Figaro*, as well as *Paris-Match*, the women's magazine *Marie-Claire*, and the hugely successful *Télé 7 Jours*, a viewers' weekly in which Hachette has some shares.

EMILIEN AMAURY, one of the founders of *Le Parisien Libéré*, now owns this and four much smaller dailies, two in the provinces and two in the Paris suburbs. His group also includes the women's monthly *Marie-France* as well as *L'Équipe*, taken on in the summer of 1965.

MARCEL BOUSSAC, the cotton magnate, is the main backer of *L'Aurore*, the Paris daily; through other companies he also controls the self-explanatory *Sport-complet* and *Paris-Turf*.

ROBERT HERSANT, the youngest of the French press barons, began his career in 1949 with the successfully controversial *Auto-Journal*: he now owns a number of provincial papers as well as an array of magazines devoted to hunting, shooting, and fishing—less aristocratic sports in France than elsewhere. In 1964, he ventured into Paris with a new daily, *Paris-Matin*, but its circulation was tiny and it folded after a few weeks.

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The late CINO DEL DUCA's empire, Napoleonic or otherwise, consists largely of publications like *Nous Deux, Intimité,* and *Pour vous Madame—Modes de Paris,* with a palpitating seven-figure circulation. The main exception, apart from his tabloid *Paris-Jour,* is the independent worker's monthly *La Vie des Métiers* which he bought in 1961—reputedly in revenge for its sneers at his *presse du cœur.*

SYLVAIN FLOIRAT, and DANIEL FILIPACCHI, finally, are both associated with the Saar-based radio station "Europe No. 1." On this, Filipacchi started the pop-music programme "Salut les Copains" ("Hi, gang!"), which later sprouted a monthly magazine of the same title and tastes. Today, the group piquantly brings together *Mademoiselle Age Tendre* and *Lui* (a Gallic *Playboy*); it also runs *Jazz Magazine* and *Pariscope,* which began as a miniature *New Yorker* not unlike *London Life,* but has now turned into a "What's On in Paris."

THE RESURGENCE of even such middle-sized newspaper groups has made some French journalists uneasy; they know all too well that editorial staff accounts for only about a fifth of their papers' costs. On one occasion, indeed, journalists briefly became expendable. In 1956, when the staff of the Amiens *Courrier Picard* went on strike against the printers' and journalists' co-operative that owned it, the printers (who formed a majority) brought the paper out themselves by filling it with agency stories. More recently, France has seen several clashes between journalists and proprietors—on *L'Équipe,* when Amaury moved in on it; on the provincial giant *Ouest-France*; and most spectacularly, on *Le Figaro* when its editor Pierre Brisson died on the last day of 1964. Fearing that Jean Prouvost was on the point of taking editorial control, 176 of the paper's 185 journalists issued an angry protest. Following the precedent set in 1951 by the staff of *Le Monde*—which now controls 49 per cent of its capital—they banded together to buy up shares in *Le Figaro*'s parent company. Then, the bid failed; but it at least ensured some formal separation between the paper's owners and its day-to-day management, and it won the editorship for Louis Gabriel-Robinet, whom Brisson had picked as successor, rather than a Prouvost nominee.

But if French newspapers are traditionally well aware that the price of the press' freedom is eternal vigilance against its proprietors, there are two further dangers to their profession that deserve greater attention. The first is the slow, pervasive influence of half-conscious political conformism. The second is a quickening change in French social habits to which the press is slow to respond.

IF TO A FOREIGN READER many French books on politics seem like superior journalism, many political articles in the French press read like essays out of books. The latter impression is heightened, in the news columns, by the general lack of a "lead" system. Few French journalists will ever tell the essence of a story in its first sentence. "Why should we," they ask, "when this is the job of the headline?" Similarly, French reporters—and especially the rather rare foreign correspondents—will implicitly or even openly editorialise in the middle of the news. Facts may be sacred, but comment is free to intrude—often in the form of national folklore: that no people equals the French in intelligence, that America wants to dominate Europe, that Britain was really responsible for the veto on her first bid to enter the Common Market.

Belletrist habits are even more evident, of course, in French press editorials. But here they take a different turn, muting opinion rather than expressing it. Mandarin delicacy of language shades off into actual ambiguity; trenchancy is rare. Except on matters of local or human interest, few French editorialists will ever state plainly: "This is wrong." The most that they usually venture is a circumlocution: "One is justified in asking oneself whether in the present situation such a course may not be susceptible of producing certain consequences of a negative character whose precise nature it is difficult to foresee. . . ." As two acute French critics of the press wrote recently,[1]

> It is not always politics as such that puts off the reader, but the abstract, difficult, over-technical way in which it is presented. Journalists too often tend to write for themselves and a restricted circle consisting of their colleagues and the few hundred people who make up the Parisian political "establishment." They are never happier than when a member of parliament taps them kindly on the shoulder and says, "Congratulations on the allusion in the last paragraph of your piece this morning." But how many of their readers understood it?

Clearly, it would be preposterous to suppose that the French press uses kid-gloved, conformist language simply because it enjoys cheap cable rates and other indirect state subsidies. A better explanation is the fear of offending and losing readers—a matter of some importance to those provincial and other papers whose circulation covers a broad geographical, political, and social spectrum. Equally important, in the Fifth

[1] *Un Journal pour trente centimes.* By FRANÇOIS ARCHAMBAULT and MICHEL AMBAULT (Julliard, 15f.).

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Republic, is the profound ambivalence in many Frenchmen's feelings for their President.

As even *Le Figaro*'s editor has put it, "General de Gaulle has no liking for the press and far from trying to use it, except in extremely rare cases, he never misses a chance to upbraid it."[2] Yet much of the press still rolls over and purrs.

> Why on earth [asked one foreign reporter] do French journalists play the General's game at his press conferences? Why behave like a lot of schoolboys taking notes on the headmaster's speech? Why ask the pre-arranged questions? Why not insist or interrupt when they don't get a straight reply? Why not just take the handout and not bother to go?

Part of the answer is that even doctrinaire anti-Gaullists—except on the extreme right—will never forget what the General has meant to his country—as a symbol from 1940 to 1944; as a saviour at the time of the Algiers mutinies, when civil war in France seemed imminent; and as the bringer of order, at least, after the factional, intra-party squabbles that had left the Third and Fourth Republics' citizens no clear political options. With such a history, and when half the country has shown, at the run-off of the last presidential election, that in the last resort it prefers de Gaulle to François Mitterand, the acquiescent air of much of the French press is understandable enough.

THE FURTHER EXPLANATION, even so, may lie still deeper. The lack of directness in some French newspaper writing may stem not from any conscious judgment about politics, but rather from the psychological atmosphere; and this in turn may be due not only to belletrist habits but also to the theoretical bent of traditional French education. By taste, by temperament, by upbringing, most well-educated Frenchmen pride themselves above all on their analytical intelligence. Skilled at distinguishing and setting in order highly abstract concepts, immensely adroit and fluent in a rather formal language, they naturally think in nuances, and feel almost socially uneasy with the blunt, racy statements of British and American newspapers or French popular speech. To the foreign observer of French politics, some Frenchmen have always seemed more concerned to analyse the situation than to change it; a similar lack of decisiveness affects many journalists too. Perhaps, in extreme form, they personify that private Montaigne that every Frenchman carries within him—a worldly, omniscient, endlessly commentating onlooker who secretly feels (between revolutions) that to understand is more important than to act.

YET IF THIS may be true of today's middle-aged generation, it scarcely applies to the young. Frenchmen, like Europeans generally, are quite rapidly changing; and the second main danger now facing the French press is that it may not adapt itself in time. If political conformism remains a professional temptation, social change in France is a potential economic threat. Today, there are six million more French people than twenty years ago, but France reads three-and-a-half-million fewer newspapers. In 1964 alone, the Paris press lost 30,000 readers and the provincial press 60,000. At the same time, the tastes of their readership have changed.

The spread of television—with eight-and-a-half million sets in 1967 against 683,000 ten years earlier—is usually cited as the French press' principal worry, partly because French TV is monopolised by the state. The provincial press, in particular, is nervous of the government's plan to introduce brand-name advertising on radio and television, thereby threatening newspaper revenue. Quite possibly, such fears are exaggerated—all the more since so much French press advertising is not even regional, but local. Experience in Britain and America, with respectively four and six times more sets per hundred people, shows that viewing in no way precludes newspaper reading, and that in an expanding economy television creates more advertising than it steals. Even as a proportion of the gross national product, advertising in France still lags far enough behind Britain and America to leave a fair margin for growth. Late in 1964, *Le Groupement des Grands Régionaux* took out a full-page advertisement in *Le Monde* to ask an uncomfortable question: "Could we do without the daily press?" Quoting the experience of New York's four-month newspaper strike it came to the conclusion that "if the daily press were one day to disappear, advertisers themselves would be quick to re-invent it."

Perhaps they might: but what kind of press would it be? Very different, no doubt, from even some of the twenty-year-olds among today's French newspapers, whose character—like their circulation—looks increasingly vulnerable in a world that two decades have transformed.

No visitor or casual observer could fail to notice that France is busily turning into a high-consumption industrialised society, following with variations the lead of America and Britain. The outward signs are everywhere: the improvement in French plumbing, the spread of supermarkets, the advertisements for brand-new apartments and suburban houses, the growth of

[2] *La Censure*. By LOUIS GABRIEL-ROBINET (Hachette, 10f.).

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commuting, the higher quality of mass-produced clothes, the fleets of automobiles, the quest for week-end cottages, the increase in travel—even the keen new shape of Frenchmen's spectacles. Until recently, *La France Rurale et Indépendante* was more than a description of how nostalgic French people like to see their country: it was also the title of a party-political review. Today, characteristically, the same publication calls itself *La France Moderne*.

At one extreme, this new style and tempo account for the success of the Floirat-Filipacchi teen-age and jet-set periodicals; but they also explain—as elsewhere in Europe—the growing numbers of less esoteric glossy magazines. Most have a bias towards "leisure," that salesman's misnomer for the rigours of sailing, travelling, gardening, do-it-yourself carpentry and interior decoration—besides all the range of pursuits described or dismissed as "women's interests." Their main appeal in France is to fairly modest spenders eager for the greater comfort, elegance and privacy that they can now afford, and anxious to make their new investments wisely. This expanding market, together with the magazines' high-quality colour printing, makes them a magnet for advertisers: the 1,200,000 purchasers of *Paris-Match*, for example, are buying something like eighty pages of advertisement each week—almost exactly as many as they get in pictures and text. No wonder that some French daily papers are showing their anxiety to share in the boom.

In France, as in Britain, some people deplore these tendencies. One journalist has complained that by opening their columns to hobbies and "leisure" activities, some Paris dailies have already turned into morning magazines; another, Philippe Tesson, editor of *Combat*, has said that "the citizen is giving way to the consumer."

In some respects, however, the pace of change looks relatively slow. Several French daily papers still give regular and very generous space to "religious news"; a former prime minister, René Pleven, still writes a political column, not in *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro*, but in *Le Petit Bleu de l'Agenais*; and the left-wing *Canard Enchaîné*, that sparkling *Private Eye* with political convictions, still appears every Wednesday with no advertisements at all. Nor are French readers without discrimination. In October 1965, Paris was offered yet another new daily, *Vingt Quatre Heures*, financed by the *Mirage* aircraft manufacturer Marcel Dassault. His only previous press venture had been the popular weekly *Jours de France* (now a magazine mainly for women), which he allegedly forbade to mention President Kennedy's death for fear of depressing the readers. A similar cake-and-circuses philosophy seemed to inspire *Vingt Quatre Heures*. Compiled by a staff of only about a dozen, it chiefly consisted of enormous photographs arranged symmetrically, a page of jokes, a page for the housewife, long romantic love-stories, and precious little news. Reassuringly, it flopped.

But if Dassault's venture showed the French press how not to appeal to a wider audience, another experiment seems a better signpost to the future. In September 1964, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber turned his eleven-year-old *L'Express* from something like a French *New Statesman* in newspaper format into a moderate left-wing imitation of *Time* magazine, printed in offset with glossy colour advertisements. At first, sales rose from around 100,000 to some 300,000; when the novelty wore off, they fell back to about 230,000. Some readers disliked the paper's new appearance—as did its direct competitor, the further-left *France Observateur*, to which several members of *L'Express'* staff migrated. Some felt that Servan-Schreiber was shifting his political position towards the conformist centre; others were upset by the brevity that the new format imposed on contributors, and the terse, laconic style that this required. But the change set off a chain reaction. Shortly afterwards, *France Observateur* became *Le Nouvel Observateur*, retaining its old format but moving out of newsprint into quality white paper; and the smaller right-wing *Nouveau Candide* (now dead) actually adopted news-magazine format, modelling its appearance on *L'Express* as openly as the latter had imitated *Time*. With experience, moreover, *L'Express'* writers are developing a style that at best combines French subtlety with Anglo-Saxon directness—proving to sceptical Frenchmen that serious treatment of the modern world need not be abstract or verbose. At present, with sales increased to 500,000, nearly half of them on subscription and more than half outside Paris, the paper has plenty of advertisements and makes a satisfying profit.

Some Frenchmen are concerned at the *"dépolitisation"* of which they see *L'Express* as a symbol. For others, it simply means an approach to politics which is less theoretical and doctrinaire. Certainly, the image of the reader in its pages and advertisements—glowing with after-shave and up-to-date technology—is disconcertingly different from that of the old *journaux politiques*; and it even contrasts with the growing younger readership of a newspaper like *Le Monde*. But whatever one's reservations about the affluent consumer, and whether or not he conforms to the cherished national stereotype, this is the type of reader that French newspaper kiosks in future are going to have to attract.

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Letter from Paris

The Forty Immortal Chairs

VICTOR HUGO'S WIFE concluded her story of his life with the following passage:

> To become a *pair de France* you had to belong to one of the categories from which the King took his choice. The only one of these open to Victor Hugo was membership of the *Académie*. He applied in 1836; the *Académie* preferred M. Dupaty. In 1839 he tried again, and the *Académie* chose M. Molé. On the third occasion, in 1840, the *Académie* passed him over for M. Flours. Hugo knocked on the door again in 1841, and this time it was at last opened to him. So he set foot on the first step of the ladder and began a new life.

There are three things to be noted about this. The first is that a great poet who became famous at an early age—a poem he submitted to the *Académie* at the age of sixteen caused him to be received by the *secrétaire perpetuel* —tried so hard and so often to become a member of an institution that again and again passed him over for colourless but less controversial candidates. The second is that membership of the *Académie Française* could count as a stage in a political career; and the third is that that august body did not feel itself honoured by the candidacy of a Victor Hugo but kept him waiting on the doorstep for five years.

All the same, Victor Hugo was elected while still young. Honoré de Balzac applied again and again (whenever a seat fell vacant by death) but invariably failed—the last time only a year before his own death. Fifty years later Paul Bourget, an epigone of Balzac's and himself a member of the *Académie*, wrote: "Had Balzac lived longer, his genius would undoubtedly have assured him entry into the academy...." But that is feeble consolation and a questionable retrospective prophecy, for Stendhal, Flaubert, and Zola, the other three great French novelists of the 19th century, were never entitled to include themselves among the "immortals," any more than were Baudelaire and Mallarmé, neither of whom would have had any objection to being elected—Baudelaire was actually a candidate once. Rimbaud and Verlaine were *a priori* excluded from consideration because of their "way of life." Even the great 20th-century dramatist and poet Paul Claudel did not find it easy to secure admission. Though at the height of his fame and an ambassador as well (this means a good deal to the *Académie Française*), he was passed over on his first attempt in favour of the then widely read but literally rather insignificant novelist Claude Farrère.[1] Only on the second attempt did he with difficulty surmount the hurdle.

HISTORIANS OF this tradition-dowered body such as Pierre Gaxotte and Wladimir d'Ormesson (both of whom are members) claim that with few exceptions the *Académie* has "always" accepted important literary figures, though often after "ripe reflection" and hence "some delay." But, as we have just seen, this is totally untrue for 19th-century French literature. One of the few important poets, apart from Victor Hugo, who were members was Alfred de Musset, of whom it is related that he once turned up for one of the Thursday meetings and said to the *commissionnaire* at the door: "Are many members here?" "Oh, yes, quite a lot." "Is Victor Hugo here?" "No, there's no sign of him yet." "Then nobody's here," said de Musset, and left.

If Cardinal Richelieu, the founder and first patron of the *Académie,* had had his way, Corneille would not have been admitted. All the same, Corneille and Racine, and later Voltaire, d'Alembert and Chateaubriand, were members, which makes it possible to claim that for more than a century-and-a-half, from the age of Richelieu to that of Napoleon, literature, if not completely, was at any rate worthily represented in the *Académie*, which from the outset was never reserved for men of letters alone. Figures of ecclesiastical distinction have always been sought after, and they were especially numerous in the 18th century (in 1714 they actually formed a majority). Traditionally, Marshals of the army have always had a place. But after the recent death of Marshal Juin there may not be a French marshal for a long time to come. It was also the custom under the *ancien régime* to elect to membership the private tutors of the royal family, on the courtly consideration that Kings of France would obviously seek out only the most distinguished minds for the education of their children. (At least in one instance, that of Bishop Fénelon, this was actually true.)

[1] A tradition which is kept alive. In December 1966 the best-selling novelist Maurice Druon, much inferior even to Claude Farrère, was preferred to the poet Pierre Emmanuel (who has, however, now been elected and is the only poet in this assembly).

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Dukes have always been numerous in the history of the *Académie*, and sometimes there was actually talk of a "ducal party" inside it. Title and social rank have facilitated entry into the society of the Forty, for it was established to be a pillar of society, a buttress of order and the state. In the 17th century malicious tongues were already saying that men of letters were an "unavoidable evil" but, after all, you had to have some members capable of taking on the task of preparing the great dictionary and grammar.

THE ACADÉMIE HAS MADE very heavy going of the making of the dictionary. It still devotes itself to it once a week, and decades have often passed between the publication of one volume and the next. One of the members of the founding generation was the great grammarian Vaugelas, who did the letter *A*. After his death there was no one to carry on to *B*. The years passed, and an academician named Furetière had his own dictionary printed in Holland; the *Académie* made a corporate protest at this as an infringement of its privilege. At the time of its foundation it had itself to contend with another body of similar mentality, *i.e.*, the *Parlement de Paris*, which for two years refused to ratify the Cardinal's edict founding the Academy out of fear of losing its own monopolistic control of book printing and selling. Some members of the parliament had actually to be *embastillés* before the seal inscribed *à l'immortalité* could be applied to the document.

The grammar made even slower progress than the dictionary. After nearly 300 years the first and so far only volume to be published appeared in 1932, and one scholar (Professor Brunot) promptly showed that it contained over 300 serious errors. And nothing has ever come of Fénelon's hope that the Academy would produce a *Rhetoric* and a *Poetics*.

[2] Frances Yates, *The French Academies of the 16th Century* (Warburg Institute, 1947).

The Italian and French precursors of *L'Académie Française* all had a wider scope and a more international outlook. Mersenne, whose project dates from 1623, wanted to see regular meetings and exchanges between the Academies of the various countries. Tommaso Campanella hoped Richelieu would organise not just an Academy but the City of the Sun. Frances Yates records[2] that the Academies were meant to be as interested in things as in words, but adds: "The contrast between 'words' and 'things' is a theme with a long history." (Now Michel Foucault with *Les mots et les choses* has attempted to write this "long history.")

ZOLA, par A. LE PETIT
(Cliché *Visages du Monde*)

WHO ARE the men of the present day —women are excluded, not by statute but by tradition—who are entitled to put the word *"de l'Académie Française"* after their name? Among them are scientists, such as Louis de Broglie, Le Prince-Ringuet and the biologist Jean Rostand (whose father, the dramatist Edmond Rostand, was also a member). The fine arts are represented solely by the film producer René Clair, while nothing has ever come of the proposal that famous painters, sculptors, and architects should be admitted. The clergy is admirably represented by Cardinal Tisserant, who is not only high in the Roman hierarchy as Bishop of Ostia but is also a distinguished scholar in his own right. Among men of letters the most famous is the octogenarian novelist François Mauriac (who in his *Carnets* and "Bloc-Notes" permits himself many malicious remarks about his colleagues). When it was proposed that Henry de Montherlant should become a member he refused to pay the formal calls on academicians that are required of candidates (by tradition though not by rule), and he was co-opted without doing any canvassing. The theatre is represented by the comedy writers Marcel Pagnol and Marcel Achard; the distinguished and eloquent Audiberti was never considered, and Jean Anouilh and Marcel Aymé are not members of the

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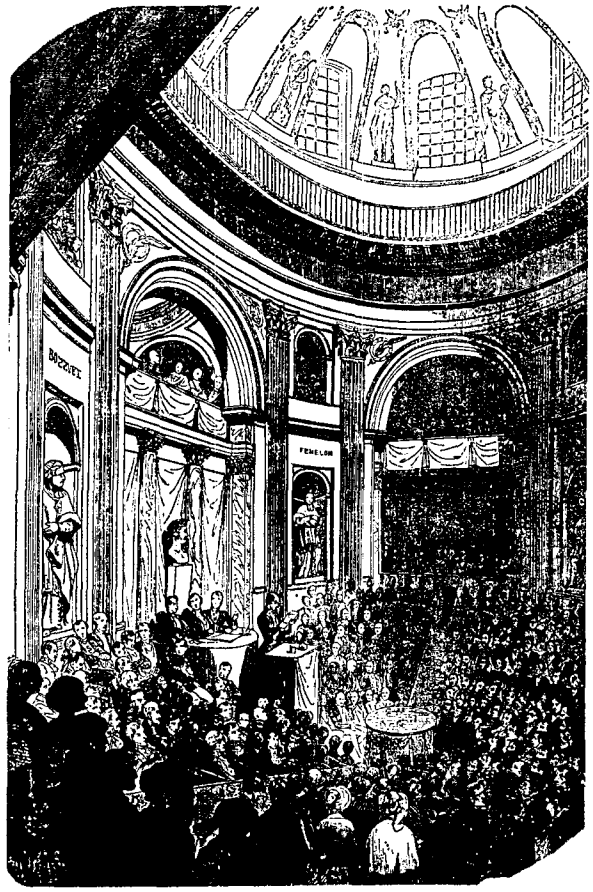
club either. But then, from Proust to Roger Martin du Gard and Georges Bernanos, what great novelists have been encouraged to ask for admittance?

Since World War II, the *Académie*'s boldest deeds have been its acceptance of the poet Jean Cocteau, who in his inaugural speech described his colleagues in their uniforms embroidered with green olive branches as "fish in a strange aquarium," and of Jean Paulhan, the *éminence grise* of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, who did not even apply for membership until he was over eighty. Before Paulhan's election an ill-wisher circulated to all academicians the pornographic *Histoire d'O*. (authorship of which has often been ascribed to Paulhan, who denies it). But the successor elected to fill Cocteau's place was once more a typical representative of the Establishment, the economist Jacques Rueff. It does not seem to disturb the *Académie* that at the present time there is just one lonely poet among its members, and not the Nobel prizewinner St.-John Perse or Pierre-Jean Jouve, whose influence on younger poets is so immense. But the *Académie* has never been on congenial terms with poetry. In its eyes true literature is rather a kind of written extension of the art of elegant conversation.

When Jean Paulhan was elected in February 1964, he had to eulogise his predecessor, Pierre Benoit, who wrote pleasantly readable best-selling novels which from Paulhan's point of view had nothing to do with literature. Paulhan began his speech by addressing his colleagues as follows:

You are surrounded by the mystery of a secret society, and not the least of your mysteries is this: You decided once and for all to devote yourselves to the study of language, but for more than 100 years you have relentlessly excluded all scholars who have devoted themselves to that very study. It might be supposed that you regard the subject of language as a well-protected preserve of your very own, or that you have the gift of interpreting it in a manner quite peculiar to yourselves. . . .

L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE



UNE SÉANCE DE RÉCEPTION SOUS LA COUPOLE
(*Tableau de Paris*, de TERNIER)

The speech of welcome to Paulhan was entrusted to the lawyer Maurice Garçon—having great lawyers among its members is another academy tradition—and Maître Garçon mingled only a little faint praise in his general damnation. He also thought Paulhan, whose wit is famous, too humourless. This meeting of the Academy was broadcast, and listeners, of course, failed to see the play of astonishment and amusement on Paulhan's face as he listened to the lawyer's oration.

THE TRADITION of sour-sweet reception of new members is, however, time-honoured. One Clérmont-Tonnerre, an inflated aristocrat with nothing else to recommend him, was received with modest remarks which included: "If it depended on merit alone, you would not be here today. . . ." But this was wrapped up in so many courtesies that the candidate, who had read the speech in advance, thought it "excellent." Afterwards a friend explained things to him: and the speaker was exiled from Paris for some years by the *Roi Soleil*.

The great exception in the Academy's exclusivity towards poets was Paul Valéry, the previous holder of whose seat was Anatole

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France, who had no ear for poetry and had actually attacked Paul Valéry's master Mallarmé. Valéry managed to make a whole speech about his predecessor without mentioning his name. Only once did he remark that his predecessor had "assumed the name of his country." In the same speech (in June 1927) Paul Valéry said that he disliked an honour "for which men of the first rank often had to wait for so long, sometimes in vain, and some were among the greatest and most meritorious. . . ."

The *Académie* is an institution of polite and high society into which not all writers fit, particularly since they have not infrequently been Bohemians, rebels, beatniks, or simple enemies of bourgeois society. André Breton broke off relations with Paul Valéry after he was elected. Jean-Paul Sartre, who even declined the Nobel Prize as "too bourgeois," never came into consideration, and because of his "way of life" Jean Genet is considered just as unworthy as was Arthur Rimbaud—and not because of homosexuality, but because of his lack of "respectability."

How has the *Académie Française* survived over 300 years and innumerable changes of régime? It is an expression of continuity in French society; and to that extent is not merely a curious fossil, as one of its members (the biologist Jean Rostand) once called it, hastening to add that there were such things as living fossils, *e.g.*, the coelacanth. Was it, then, born a fossil? Consider its origins.

A friend of writers named Conrart (incidentally, a Huguenot) had formed a circle in his house in which literature and new books were discussed. This was the time of the great *salons* of the *précieuses*, when new ways and linguistic usages were conquering the *élite*. Cardinal Richelieu, well-informed as always, decided to take them under his patronage and give them an official character. Whether he was also motivated by his own literary ambitions—he wrote plays and employed dramatists to work for him—or regarded with suspicion all gatherings that were not under his own control, his attitude to literature was as political as it was to everything else. He regarded the task of purifying the French language as part of the establishment of a greater France. Conrart and his friends were by no means enthusiastic, and their reply was salted with irony, humbly pointing out that "such lofty ambitions had never entered their heads and his Eminence's intentions surprised them greatly."

But what could one do in a time when there was no such thing as an independent author who could live by his writings? Corneille alone had the prestige of public success behind him as a consequence of the reception given to *Le Cid*; and Richelieu's first request submitted to the Academicians—whose number he increased to forty because of the role that number plays in the Bible—was to pass critical literary judgment on *Le Cid*. Why? Was it an amateur dramatist's jealousy at the success of a professional colleague? There were deeper reasons. Richelieu had forbidden duelling, and a duel plays an important part in *Le Cid*; he was at war with Spain, and the play glorified the Spaniards. Thus it was primarily a politician's pique. The Academicians at first declined, on the ground that it was not usual to pass judgment on a work in the absence of a specific request for this by the author. Corneille was therefore induced to express precisely such a request. Richelieu had the Academy's respectful criticism of *Le Cid* brought to him, and in spite of the pressure of other business spent several days polishing it.

As a man of letters, could not the Cardinal have been a member of the *Académie* himself? As its patron he never attended its meetings. But his intention to turn it into an instrument of the state was plain, and the tradition survived from Louis XIV to Napoleon and after (though obsequious flattery was never practised to the extent that it was in the time of the *Roi Soleil*, when the pronouncements of the academicians remind one of the speech patterns of the Stalin era). On the Cardinal's death the *Académie* found a new patron in the Chancellor Séguier. This was its salvation, because the first Academies in the 16th century, when the institution was copied from the Italian models, had never outlasted their patrons' lifetime. The custom by which the patron of the *Académie Française* was the head of the state who exercised the power of veto over its elections passed into desuetude under the Third Republic—but General de Gaulle revived it when he blocked the election of the writer Paul Morand, who had served as ambassador of the Vichy government in Berne. (It would never have occurred to President Lebrun to oppose the election of the monarchist Charles Maurras, who in his newspaper poured daily scorn on the Republic but, on his election, was

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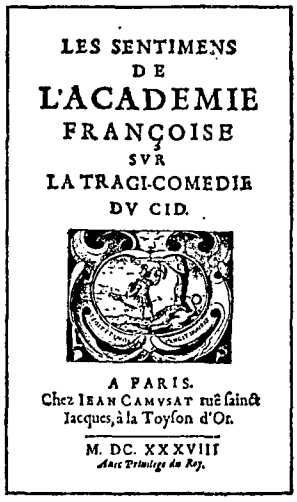
provided with the same official guard of honour as other academicians.)

UNDER THE THIRD REPUBLIC it was normal for the Academy to be on the Right, and the 1944–5 *libération* caused several convulsions in its ranks. Members convicted of treason or felony or "collaboration"—such as Marshal Pétain, Charles Maurras, and the Vichy Minister Abel Bonnard—were expelled. But this was nothing in comparison with the purge of republicans and Bonapartists that had followed the return of Louis XVIII. De Gaulle takes the *Académie* very seriously, as he does all institutions that contribute to continuity, tradition, and the propagation of French influence. François Mauriac, in his panegyrical book on the General, describes how tensely he awaited his first meeting with the *Libérator*, hoping to hear great thoughts about *la France* or *la grande politique*.

> What utterly surprised me was that the great drama through which we had just lived (the date was September 1, 1944) was not even mentioned at lunch. Who would have expected that? Instead, de Gaulle questioned me about André Gide. He took a great interest in the *Académie*, and who the new occupants of the empty chairs were to be....

(To ask François Mauriac about André Gide was more maliciously witty than Mauriac cares to notice.)

On the jacket of the third volume of the General's *Memoirs*, comments by men of letters on the earlier volumes are quoted, and all the quotations are from members of the *Académie*. One may assume that the choice was made by the author himself. Napoleon had made the *Académie* a constituent of the *Institut*, which it has formally remained; like the *Institut*, it is housed in the Palais Mazarin. The *Institut* meant so much to Napoleon that during his Egyptian campaign he used to sign himself *"membre de l'Institut et général officier commandant."*


LES SENTIMENS
DE
L'ACADEMIE
FRANÇOISE
SVR
LA TRAGI-COMEDIE
DV CID.

A PARIS.
Chez IEAN CAMVSAT ruë ſainct Iacques, à la Toyſon d'Or.

M. DC. XXXVIII
Auec Priuilege du Roy.

THUS THE ACADEMY was founded as a state institution for the purpose of "purifying" the French language and so to prepare it to function as a world language and increase the fame of France. The extent to which this ambition was achieved is demonstrated by the way the *Académie* was imitated. The Berlin academy conducted all its business in French, and bestowed a laurel wreath on Rivarol for his answer to the prize question about the reasons for the superiority of the French language.

Academicians used to be paid, and nowadays they still receive a fee (the *jeton de présence*) for every meeting they attend. The penniless La Fontaine never missed a meeting if he could help it, with the result that his colleagues called him *"très jetonnier."* The *Académie* would be far richer than it is today if it had not invested its revenues in state loans, but it is still a large property owner; its possessions include the demesne of Chantilly and the building round the Passage Vivienne near the Paris *Bourse*. It administers numerous foundations on whose behalf it distributes prizes (more for "merit" than for literature). For literature it has had to yield to its competitor the Goncourt Academy, which has only ten members and makes only one award, the prestigious *Prix Goncourt*.

The kind of high society and social outlook that the Academy embodies can be seen from the nature of the foundations it administers. The most celebrated of its prizes is that for Virtue founded by a M. Montyon; an Academician has to deliver an oration on the subject on the occasion of its annual award. Then there is the prize awarded annually by the Farcy van Ael Foundation

> to a French Catholic family [Catholicism is insisted on in many of these foundations] that has at least four children—who are either living or have died for France—and is poor and works in a field connected with the manufacture of corsets.

Then there are awards which nowadays seem more symbolic than anything else, such as that to "the daughter of a senior officer who is without means and has not secured a tobacconist's concession from the Government." There is the Darracq Foundation, which gives a prize to "a young girl who belongs by birth to the best society but has been forced by blows of fate to work and has preferred a life of honourable and honest toil to that other kind of life that can bring a woman immoral wealth." There are a number of prizes for those with large families, and among these as many as twenty-seven children of the same marriage are envisaged. There is also a prize for "a poor Christian family of unimpeachable morals that has adopted one or more orphans and brought them up devoted to duty and their country."

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A whole social history of old France can be read from the 140 prize endowments administered by the *Académie*; all, with honest realism, assume an invariable connection between work and poverty. There is a prize for a workman employed for thirty years in the same shop, and another for servants who have served the same masters for forty years "without having drawn all their wages." And this reflects the same patriarchal world that French children meet in the Comtesse de Ségur's still popular books in the *Bibliothèque Rose*.

One wonders how the *Académie* manages nowadays to seek out honest French and Christian poor to whom to award these prizes, because the genuinely poor in France tend today to be Portuguese or North African Muslims. Nevertheless, it accepted Jean Cocteau and Jean Paulhan as members and it seeks out and rewards aged loyal domestics: no inflexibility here. But one is reminded of how often this astonishing range has been satirised. Barbey d'Aurevilly wrote a sharp attack against it which has recently been reprinted, and there was Alphonse Daudet's biting novel *l'Immortel*. Between the wars the vaudeville *l'Habit Vert* was frequently played and became a movie. Gaston Leroux, one of the best known writers of detective stories, made the *Académie* the scene of his recently republished novel *The Bewitched Chair*....

ALPHONSE DAUDET PAR ANDRÉ GILL
(Cliché *Visages du Monde*)

All this, of course, is part of the *Académie*'s fame and legend. Many writers who have in their time scorned it have later joined it. "When we are forty, it has been said, we are ridiculed. But when we are thirty-nine, everyone genuflects...." It must not be forgotten that in the 18th century the *Académie* was in the centre of all the Enlightenment controversies. Voltaire made the most strenuous efforts to ensure his admission and actually had himself sent a medallion blessed by Pope Benedict in order to be able to tell his opponents not to be "more papist than the Pope." With d'Alembert as secretary of the *Académie* the party of the Encyclopaedists triumphed (though it was one of its respected members, the writer Chamfort, who later argued before the National Convention that it should be dissolved).

There is a notable description by Heinrich Heine of a meeting of the *Académie* under Louis Philippe:

> Every year I regularly attend the ceremonial meeting in the rotunda of the Palais Mazarin. One has to wait for hours to secure a seat among the *élite* of the intellectual aristocracy, to which, fortunately, the most beautiful women belong. After a long wait the Academicians at last appear through a side door. Most of them are either very old or at any rate no longer very healthy; no use looking for beauty among them. They take their seats on long, hard, wooden benches. (One talks of "academy chairs," but these do not exist in reality; they are a mere fiction.')
>
> The session begins with a long, tedious speech on the year's work and the entries for the literary prizes by the temporary president. Then the secretary rises, the *secrétaire perpetuel*, who holds office in perpetuity like the King. The secretary of the Academy and Louis-Philippe are persons who cannot be deposed by ministerial or parliamentary whims. Unfortunately Louis-Philippe is now advanced in years, and who knows whether his successor will maintain the blessings of peace with as much skill as he. But Mignet is still young, spared by the hand of time that whitens hair and wrinkles brows. The handsome Mignet still has the same golden locks as twelve years ago, and his face has an Olympian radiance. The present perpetual secretary of the *Académie* is one of the greatest barbers of our time. Even if one hasn't a single sound hair on one's head, he is able to conjure up a curl of praise for one and conceal that bald pate under a wig of eloquence. How fortunate are these French Academicians! There they sit blissfully on their secure benches, and they die happy because they know that, however doubtful their careers may have been, the excellent Mignet will eulogise and praise them after death. Under the spreading palms of his oratory, as perpetually green as his uniform, lulled by the breeze of his

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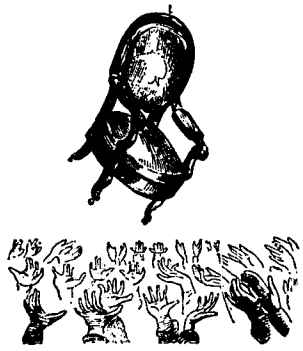
rhetorical antitheses, they rest here in the *Académie* as in a cool oasis. Meanwhile the caravans of humanity pass by unnoticed save for the tinkling of the camels. . . .

THE ACADÉMIE, HAVING MADE the codification of the language its special task, exposed itself to ridicule during the last century by first refusing to accept the candidacy of the great lexicographer Littré, whose dictionary is still a standard work, because a Cardinal who was a member objected to his "irreligiousness." Since then the *Académie* has not been particularly intolerant. But its authority in matters of French usage is not highly rated by the grammarians who regularly discuss such matters. French, which in the 18th century conquered the world, is now on the defensive, trying to beat back a massive invasion of English words. But the *Académie* plays no special role in the operation.

The absurdity of many of the links between literature and the Establishment, between so-called culture and the state is too easy to criticise. Before the war there was a member who was an industrialist, and his total literary *œuvre* was said to have consisted of a prospectus for a headache cure.

But this link can also be seen in another light. As Friedrich Sieburg wrote in his once-famous book *Is God a Frenchman?*—

> In France it is the writer, not the *savant*, who occupies the first place among the intellectuals. His function is to counterbalance the specialist and prevent the disintegration of culture into separate disciplines. The Specialist appears as the auxiliary worker who has voluntarily left the centre of things and is only justified when he makes his way back to it. Whereas the Man of Letters is conscious of the comprehensive nature of his work and conceives his function as the common denominator of such professional activities as he may incidentally be engaged in. Every Frenchman in a leading position, whether he is a general, a business man or a politician, feels it incumbent upon him to sacrifice to the goddess Literature and take part in her rites. He thereupon garnishes his reports with literary allusions. The important thing about it is that such quotations serve not so much to adorn his speeches, reports, opinions or orders-of-the-day, as to make them more easily intelligible. A business man who quotes Barrès at a company meeting provokes not mirth but a feeling of solidarity. For every one of his hearers is proud to belong to a civilisation which urgently calls for the writer's services instead of excluding them. . . . The slogans and the "dressing" are essential, and they always come from literature as a source of legitimacy.



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Encore un fauteuil vacant à l'Académie!

So it is that a really good knowledge of the subtleties of one's own language and literature comes to count among the foremost social virtues. It is not the least of its anomalies. It was long ago said of the *Académie* that it is the "last trace of the monarchy in France." Under the Fifth Republic, in which monarchical features that had never completely vanished have become more discernible again, the French *Académie* seems less and less of an anachronism. The future has caught up with the past, and loves the pomp and power of it all.

EDMOND ROSTAND'S Cyrano de Bergerac (a contemporary of the founding fathers) has these lines:

> *"Bardin, Boissat et Cureau de la Chambre, Porchères, Colomby, Bourzeys, Bourdon, Arbaud, tous ces noms qui ne mourront jamais, que c'est beau."*

But it is only the chairs, which are never allowed to remain empty for long, that are "immortal." The big Larousse now includes the colloquial term used of academicians: *cul à fauteuil*, "chair bottom." Naturally enough, it is not included in the *Académie*'s dictionary. For a "fossil," the active part it plays in the public mind is astonishing. That sceptical organ of the Liberal Left, *Le Monde*, prints verbatim in a four-page supplement the two main speeches made at the reception of every new member. All the other newspapers report the event and at least print excerpts from the speeches. However superannuated the collective mentality may seem to be, one continually notes how many serious figures of French public life, modern and sophisticated, still aspire to a chair. Ah, to be received into this most exclusive of all clubs —it would be the climax of one's life. How well the Cardinal understood his *France immortelle!*

François Bondy

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LETTERS

Writing about Lenin

One point in Alasdair MacIntyre's review [Encounter, May] of our symposium *Lenin: the Man, the Theorist, the Leader*, should not be allowed to pass without comment. MacIntyre "cannot quite understand" why we included John Keep's chapter on "Lenin as Tactician," since certain of his statements on Lenin "are not merely false but so obviously so." One of the two examples held up to ridicule with a confidence that does not even deign to cite evidence in support is the following: "Lenin continued to believe that laws and institutions had no real part to play in regulating the life of a socialist order."

MacIntyre might have found it easier to assess the value of John Keep's article if he had even a passing acquaintance with the early history of the Soviet régime. He might even have troubled to read Lenin's *State and Revolution* before assaulting in this cavalier fashion the well-merited reputation of our leading scholar on the early history of Bolshevism. Had he pursued his researches a little further he might have come across Lenin's advice to the communists of Elets in July 1918: "It is essential to oust all Socialist Revolutionaries from responsible posts... we cannot of course give you written authorisation to arrest Socialist Revolutionaries, but if you drive them out of Soviet organs [to which they had been elected—L.S., P.R.] ... we in the centre ... will only praise you for it."

So much for Lenin on institutions. As for law, Lenin's views are well reflected in his instruction of 17 May 1922 about the new criminal code then in process of preparation: "The paragraph on terror must be formulated in as wide terms as possible, since only a revolutionary consciousness of justice and the revolutionary conscience can determine the conditions of its application in practice."

Perhaps MacIntyre really meant to give us an example about how not to write about Lenin. As the Russians say—"paper can stand anything."

Leonard Schapiro,
Peter Reddaway

London School of Economics and Political Science

If Mr. Keep was relying on the type of evidence cited by Professor Schapiro and Mr. Reddaway for the generalisation which they quote, then what is at fault is his logic. For it is quite untrue that examples of this kind show that Lenin believed "that laws and institutions had no real part to play in regulating the life of the Socialist order." I am sorry to labour the obvious but the Communist Party is an institution, so was the *Cheka*; and the new Bolshevik codes of law were meant to be codes of law. Professor Schapiro and Mr. Reddaway may disapprove of Lenin's attitude to laws and dislike the institutions which he believed necessary in constructing and regulating the life of a Socialist order, but they should not try to defend the indefensible.

On re-reading Mr. Keep to make sure that I have not been unfair, it appears to me that perhaps he simply did not mean what he said at certain key moments. Perhaps it would be charitable to suppose that that is also true of Professor Schapiro and Mr. Reddaway.

Alasdair MacIntyre

Department of Sociology, University of Essex

Pornographers and Censors

Among the emotive words, ingenious metaphors and resounding abstractions with which Mr. J. W. Lambert belabours Mr. van den Haag [Encounter, *March*] for relating pornography to crime, it gets increasingly hard to determine what anyone has really been discussing. Perhaps one should get back to simple practicalities.

Among the commonest situations to confront the earlier psychotherapists was that of the patient saddled in childhood with a load of guilt about masturbation. Believing the habit to be rare, degenerate, and repulsive to healthy people, he practised it seldom and felt very bad about it after. The analyst reassured him in terms now so familiar that they are a cliché in the advice columns of women's papers. This relief from guilt was obviously meant to cover the future, as well as the past.

When however a patient admits impulses to a savage form of sadism, the analyst does not tell him not to worry, that plenty of other people do the same and write their memoirs; that it is a natural way in which to relieve his tensions; going on to describe invitingly methods which had not yet occurred to him. If, after having thus been freed from his inhibitions, the patient went off with zest to seek a victim, the doctor would surely have to face professional or even legal enquiry. In the case of a sadist who has never before met sympathy and support for his inclinations, I cannot see how the writer of sadistic pornography is in a different moral position. It is his legal position which is the subject of debate.

Mary Renault

Cape Town

Margin of Error

How can David Lodge (*et al.*) in Encounter, February, have so obtusely failed to hear and to see the "pings" anticipating the ends of lines of typing, and the pervasive "whites" of the sheet of paper on which Beckett was spilling his blurred consciousness?

Mavis Klein

Melbourne, Australia

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Shonfield and Forster's India

A Controversial Exchange

ANDREW SHONFIELD's article "The Politics of Forster's India" [ENCOUNTER, January] depends, unluckily, on a premise fatal to his argument. Mr. Shonfield says again and again that *A Passage to India* is a political novel—"The central issue is about politics"; "Political interpretation is an integral part of Forster's book"; and so on. This is simply not true. *A Passage to India* is not about politics any more than *Moby Dick* is about the trying-out of the whale carcass, or any other aspect of whaling. The book is "primarily" about personal relations, as Mr. Shonfield says, but as Forster develops this subject it is not politics that affect the characters' relations with each other: it is the nature of the world-stuff itself. The last sentence of the book, which Mr. Shonfield quotes, must be taken as a fanciful metaphor to support his interpretation; in fact that sentence, with its list of the things in the world that do not "want" the Englishman Fielding and the Indian Aziz to be friends, is something like literal.

Even to say, then, that *A Passage to India* is "primarily" about personal relations is rather like saying that *Moby Dick* is about whaling; it is true only in a superficial sense. The central issues of Forster's book are cosmic order, whether it exists, and human capacity to comprehend it, if it does. The subtitle of Frederick Crews' *E. M. Forster: the Perils of Humanism* comes near to naming Forster's fundamental concern in *A Passage to India*: whether the traditional Western man-centred thought and values are at all relevant to the world all men find themselves in. It is the explicit verdict of the book that they are not finally relevant, because they are not adequate; too much escapes their net.

One needs to re-read *A Passage to India* to see fully how limited a view it is that regards the book as a political novel; and to refute that view by explication of the text would require far more space than is appropriate here. I can only indicate the lines such a rejoinder would take. Mr. Shonfield's handling of illustrative detail does not inspire confidence. It is not true, for example, that only the Moslem Indians in *A Passage to India* "are full of fun and jokes and horseplay"; the Hindus celebrating the birth of Shri Krishna in Part III are also full of jokes and joy. Fielding is not "Forster's lonely and enlightened hero"; there is no hero in the usual sense, and Fielding's enlightenment is explicitly shown to fall short of what is needed. The Hindu Professor Godbole is not merely "a slightly more articulated version than usual of that stock character of English fiction, the Inscrutable Oriental"; Forster's description of his physical appearance, and the actions he gives him to do, are carefully planned to suggest the role of Hinduism in the metaphysical economy of the book. These are not trivial matters. *A Passage to India*, despite its apparent matter-of-fact and realistic texture, belongs in the modern category of the poetic novel, in which the novelist's aim is to orchestrate every word and sentence, and every image and detail, into an aesthetically integrated whole. The cumulative effect of mis-reading details in such a novel can be very great. Nor can one, in such a novel, ignore large tracts of detail, or arbitrarily take one set as the controlling set, as Mr. Shonfield seems to do. Forster's careful evocation of the various landscapes in his novel, and his placement of his descriptive passages; his systematic imagery and choice of descriptive language; the authorial asides (and again, the placement of these asides)—all these aspects of his novel are at least no less conspicuous than politics, even if one construes "politics" in a very wide sense.

NONE THE LESS, "it is not entirely clear [to Mr. Shonfield] what Forster meant when he said many years after that 'political views' in *A Passage to India* are of 'secondary or tertiary' importance." That being so, I think it is fair to question whether Mr. Shonfield understands, not merely this novel, but the genre of fiction itself, well enough to judge Forster's intention and achievement. Early in his essay he says that considering the relative importance of Hinduism in India, a writer with Forster's aims "would surely, one might have expected, have found it necessary to place one or more Hindus at the very centre of the drama. Instead Forster chose to make the main character, Aziz, a Moslem."

Leaving aside the mistaken view that Forster intended to write a political novel, it is surely a limited concept of fiction that requires the subject matter to be shaped according to such a rigid convention. Limited, and limiting: there is in fact no single central character in the novel, English or Indian; all the main characters move in and out of the focus of narration. Again, in arguing that since no Hindu appears at the centre of the action Hinduism does not have its proper weight in the novel, Mr. Shonfield disregards Part III, which takes place two years after the events that occupy Parts I and II. (He also disregards the considerable body of criticism that has appeared on Forster in the last fifteen years. It is not only Professor Stone who argues for the importance of Hinduism to the meaning of *A Passage to India*—in *The Cave and the Mountain*, which Mr. Shonfield uses as a springboard—but many others as well, among them Professor Crews, whose book I mentioned earlier, and Professor James McConkey in *The Novels of E. M. Forster*, to name only two of them. One may of course challenge the critical consensus by

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appealing to the work in question, but to do this, I have been saying, is exactly what will damage Mr. Shonfield most.) If the novel ended with Part II it would be quite plausible to call it a political novel: not entirely satisfactory, but much more so than it is when Part III is taken into account. Narrative order creates meaning; and Hinduism is important in *A Passage to India* because Part III, where Hinduism figures very largely, draws together the lines laid down in I and II.

I HAVE SAID NOTHING directly so far to Mr. Shonfield's main point, that by getting the relative importance of Hindu and Moslem wrong, and by peopling his novel with thematically convenient but implausible characters, Forster vastly oversimplified and misrepresented the political realities of India at that time. These are not unanswerable objections, even on Mr. Shonfield's own terms. But all that really needs to be said to them is that a critic cannot legitimately simplify his job by collapsing different genres into one, treating a novel of one kind according to the very different criteria that apply to another; and that it cannot be fair, or in any way useful, to censure a writer for not doing what he did not set out to do.

HARLAND S. NELSON

University of Bergen

WRITING about *A Passage to India*, Andrew Shonfield [ENCOUNTER, January] observes that " as an account of something which purports to be typical of Imperial India, the picture distorts." Assuming that the political question is one of the important themes of the novel, I cannot accept that his criticism of Forster's treatment of it is valid. Shonfield ignores the political circumstances of the years during which the novel took shape in Forster's mind, and the result is that the distortion of which he accuses Forster sometimes characterises his own generalisations.

It is wrong, for instance, to presume that the India with which Forster is concerned was "at the zenith of British Imperial rule." The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were in reality meagre and came too late; the Indians had grown impatient in their appeal for a respectable status within the Empire, and had wearied themselves in fighting the imperial war. The Rowlatt Act and the Amritsar massacre showed only the pathetic collapse of imperial rule, when the Government had to put up a pretence of power by having recourse to martial law. "It seems improbable," wrote Forster (*Abinger Harvest*) in the year of the Amritsar massacre, "that a rule which now rests avowedly upon force can endure. . . ." And in *A Passage to India* this business of holding to power by repression is satirised in the words of the subaltern who thinks that the incident in the cave would never have happened if "Barabas Hill was under military control." "Station a bunch of Gurkhas at the entrance of the cave [he says] was all that was wanted."

Andrew Shonfield searches through Forster's book for the "spirit of improvement" in contemporary Indo-British relations. But the fact of Indo-British relations from 1920 up to the transfer of power is that India's political mood was dominated by the spirit of non-cooperation and civil disobedience, which meant, essentially, that the Indian no longer showed any need of the Englishman, while the British attitude was marked by a blind, self-deceiving refusal to face this new reality. At the second Round Table Conference in 1931, Gandhi claimed a connection with the British people "such as can exist between two absolute equals." "Only a free India," Nehru thought, "could cooperate with England on equal terms."

Forster had perceived the reality of the situation, and so did the Prince of Wales, whose visit to India in 1921 coincided with Forster's, and who wrote in disillusionment to Edwin Montagu: "India is no longer a place for a white man to live in." But administration in India and imperial policy were controlled by other men, who continued to hold on to the Raj in the illusory "spirit of improvement."

A Passage to India registers the reality of the political situation with remarkable competence and accuracy. Aziz's words (he speaks here as an Indian, not as a Moslem): "We wanted to know you ten years back—now it's too late" sum up the precise tone of the political revolution of the '20s and thereafter, just as Fielding's last words typify the confused British mind at this time. His "zeal for honesty" had destroyed his belief that "England holds India for her good" but his illusions about the "spirit of improvement" were still potent: "Away from us, Indians go to seed at once. . . ."

Effective Indianisation of the Civil Service and the administrative improvements that Shonfield speaks of all came later than Forster's novel, but also too late to alter the basic political picture—which remained gloomy till 1947. An able historian of the period (R. J. Moore, *Liberation and Indian Politics*, 1966) has written that Britain's departure from India was "in indecent haste." The withdrawal was largely forced by Britain's own difficulties after the "next European war" as Aziz had prophetically imagined; it showed no particular political wisdom on the part of the British apart from an acceptance of the inevitable.

G. K. DAS

Queens' College,
Cambridge

PROFESSOR NELSON evidently holds the view, argued at length by Wilfred Stone in *The Cave and the Mountain*, that *A Passage to India* is a deep metaphysical book with Hinduism as a major theme. I indicated in my article some of the reasons which make me think that this is a false view of the matter. Of course the issue could be argued at greater length—on both sides. That the book has certain literary qualities which Mr. Nelson describes it was no part of my purpose to deny. But I continue to find Part III, which he so admires, weak. It feels to me like an addendum to the body of the story—a picture of Aziz "running to seed" in a princely state, continuing the awkward relationship

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with his English friends—and advances the reader as little as, say, the Finale of *Middlemarch* towards a deeper understanding of the characters who have engaged his attention in the earlier part of the book. Since Professor Nelson says it would be "quite plausible" to call the book a "political novel" without Part III, and I think that Part III adds nothing significant to the work, he will perhaps see why it is we differ.

However, he insists on his own fist-shaking style of argument—telling me, for instance, that because I say "it is not entirely clear" what Forster meant when he said political views were of "secondary or tertiary" importance in the novel, I am not fit to comment usefully on a work of this quality. What he fails to say is that this sentence of mine which he picks out introduced two different possible interpretations that might be attached to Forster's assertion. With one of these I had no quarrel. But I argued that the other interpretation could not be accepted, because it denied the obvious truth that "the drama of the book revolves round a conflict of political attitudes." This is the crux. As Professor Nelson remarks in his last paragraph, my "main point" is about the way in which Forster, through his insistence on a particular political scenario, distorted his characters (and not only, as he prefers to put it, that his choice of characters "misrepresented the political realities" of the situation). I am not the knowledgeable whaling expert to his *Moby Dick*. The analogy, as I see it, would be if having detected some artistic weakness in *Moby Dick*, I had then traced their origin to some special view held by Melville, and not borne out by the known facts, about the way that the men from Nantucket behaved when they got on to a whaling ship. I don't in fact take this view of *Moby Dick* at all.

Mr. Das, on the other hand, thinks that I have got the politics of India in the early 1920s all wrong. I do not follow the meaning of his assertion that the British put up "a pretence of power" by their actions at the time of the Amritsar Massacre and afterwards. The evidence suggests that they remained in control of what was, of course, an increasingly explosive situation for several years more. He attacks me for trying to find some hint of a "spirit of improvement" in Forster's book, and suggests that what I am after is some indication of improvement in Indo-British relations. If he will look at the context (p. 64, second column), he will see that the subject of my comment at this point is the attitudes of British administrators, as Forster describes them, towards India's future: their absence of any interest in improvement. Some of these men, I suggest, were in fact interested in it.

But Mr. Das seems to want to make me argue that British relations with India from 1920 to 1947 were good, and that Forster was lying when he showed they were already very bad at the beginning of this period. I am not saying anything of the sort: only that these relations were not quite the dialogue of the deaf that Forster makes out.

ANDREW SHONFIELD

London

Confusion

IN YOUR February 1968 issue Mr. Amos Elon quotes me as having written "that tension and danger serve a useful role in the crystallisation of a new nation, 'giving it backbone and unity'." I have not written anything for *Ha'aretz* for years, nor did I say or write anything remotely similar to the above quoted words in any other publication. The whole thing must have originated in Mr. Elon's imagination.

G. BAER

The Hebrew University, Jerusalem

I OWE Professor G. Baer, Director of the Institute of Asian and African Studies at the University of Jerusalem, a deep apology for confusing him in print [ENCOUNTER, February 1968] with Mr. C. Baer, the author of an article which appeared in *Ha'aretz* July 14, 1967, and from which I quoted in my article.

It is an inexcusable error and I hope that Professor Baer, who was thus identified with a view he has certainly never uttered, will forgive me.

AMOS ELON

Tel Aviv

"Eros Centre"

THE LECTURE of the Hamburg Letter [ENCOUNTER, March] from the opening of a bordello has left me the feeling of a very shocking scripture. How can a young German lady be so silly as to frighten the feeling of honest women. I am very sorry that our famous leader Dr. Marie Elisabeth Lüders lives no longer. We don't have an equal fighter for honour and rights of women. It was not good for ENCOUNTER to show by such a press a very slow and ugly taste.

ELSE SANDER

Berlin

"O Jerusalem . . ."

DAVID MARQUAND writes very persuasively [ENCOUNTER, February] "Most Jews outside Israel have no intention of going there to live, and their descendants will have less. As time goes on the barriers between the Jewish communities of the outside world, and the societies of which they form part, will fade away until the difference between a Jew and a Gentile becomes no more portentous to either than the difference between an Anglican and a Methodist."

It is sadly interesting to read the following similar and equally persuasive observations: "Modern Zionism is vitiated by its erroneous premises. It is based on the idea that anti-Semitism is unconquerable. . . . Under the influence of religious toleration . . . nationalities are daily losing more of their racial character. With the passing away of anti-Semitism, Jewish nationalism will disappear." This latter is by Lucien Wolf, and is found in the article "Zionism" of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition (1911).

SAUL B. GILSON

New York

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London

THE FIRST *"dirty old man" in English literature —in those very words—crops up in a book by Rosamond Lehmann published in 1932—or so the Supplement to the giant* Oxford English Dictionary *will tell us when it goes on sale in 1975.*

The dictionary of dictionaries is being brought up to date, with a massive supplement recording all new words and usages that have come into the language since 1928—and a good many that were already in, but languishing unrecognised.

Rosamond Lehmann's "dirty old man" is merely one of the new entries under "dirty." Others include "dirty bomb" (of nuclear weapons), "dirty look," "dirty work at the crossroads" (attributed to P. G. Wodehouse, 1914), "dirty dog" (of persons), "dirty end of the stick," and many other dirty expressions.

The criteria for inclusion are usefulness and a life-span of a few years at least. "Skiffle" wins a place and so, marginally, does "hula hoop." Under "black" there are twenty-two columns each of 10¼ inches. New usages range from "black comedy" to "blackout" (of lighted windows, 1938, and pilots, 1940).

"Astronaut" (first use 1929).

"Escalation" is recorded during the mid-Twenties, in a treaty limiting German warship production: it was first used of nuclear weapons in about 1961. "Over-kill" will be in. So also will "square," "with-it," "rat-race" and "psychedelic."

"Atomic" gets three-and-a-half columns. "Sputnik," of course, is in, with quotations from newspapers on the day the first went up (October 4, 1957). The latest word to go to press is "disc-jockey," with supporting quotations dated 1941 and 1954. SUNDAY TIMES

New York

FIT TO PRINT? *Dismayed by the volume—and tone—of advertisements for marriage manuals and other how-to-do-it sex books,* The New York Times Book Review *recently notified advertising agencies it will no longer accept such ads. "Since we did not feel it was possible to discriminate among books in this category . . . we established a policy of excluding this advertising entirely," the head of the* Times *advertising acceptability committee said in a letter to the agencies. The sex-manual ads, he wrote, "produced an undesirable impression for the Book Review."* NEWSWEEK

Warsaw

A WARSAW COURT *today sentenced a 34-year-old literary critic to three years in prison because of a satirical operetta. Janusz Szpotanski was the author of the non-published satire. He was sentenced after a week-long secret trial.*

Mr. Szpotanski, the court said, "made, kept and distributed his operetta 'Cisi I Gegacze' (The Silent and the Cacklers) containing false information on social, political and economic conditions in Poland which could do harm to the interests of the state and which could lower the prestige of state authorities."

About 30 people, most of them young friends of the defendant, were in the court during the reading of the verdict. Mr. Szpotanski's operetta was found in the possession of Nina Karsov, a young Jewish writer who was sentenced last October under the same law. Mr. Szpotanski was a witness in her trial and she a witness in his.

The operetta, according to some who saw it, satirised eminent Polish personalities including Communist chief Wladyslaw Gomulka and Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski. However no names were used. PARIS HERALD TRIBUNE

Manchester

FIERCELY STILL, *with banners waving, the protesting students of Manchester march on.* "END HANGING IN RHODESIA," *says the banner of Student A. Student B's two steps behind says:* "HANG IAN SMITH." *Well, you know what they mean.* THE GUARDIAN

London

THE LENGTHY, *and meticulously accurate, first person report of how Sir Percy Loraine, our pre-Second World War Ambassador in Turkey refused Ataturk's dying offer of the Presidency —perhaps the most remarkable document in Piers Dixon's biography of his father Sir Pierson Dixon [published in the* Sunday Times*]— is in fact a brilliant parody of Sir Percy's voluminous telegram style by Sir Charles Mott-Radclyffe, now Tory M.P. for Windsor.*

In 1938 Sir Charles was an honorary attaché at our Rome Embassy, where Sir Pierson, later to become Ambassador in Paris, was then Second Secretary. Sir Pierson liked the spoof telegram and kept it.

"I found it among my father's private papers —it had all the appearance of authenticity, and its origins could not be ascertained," says a not enormously amused Dixon, who discovered only on Friday from friends of Sir Charles that it was a joke. He has prepared an addendum for his biography, Double Diploma, *which is published this week.*

Sir Charles modestly passes his parody off as "just an office joke." "It wasn't meant to deceive anyone, and didn't deceive anyone—at least till now. I think I had had lots of late nights deciphering these long telegrams, wrote it out for fun and chucked it to Dixon and said: 'Look here, this is the telegram we'll get about Loraine's last interview with Ataturk.' He liked it, and asked if he might keep it."

Are any more "office jokes" lurking like booby-traps in the history of the late 1930s? Sir Charles hesitates. "Let's deal with this one at the moment." THE TIMES

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Edward Brathwaite's previous book, *Rights of Passage*, was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation and led to his being awarded an Arts Council Poetry Bursary. Now, in *Masks*, he has reached the second part of his survey of the contemporary New World Negro. This takes him back to Africa to examine the nature of the world he has lost. 21/- net

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